PIGEON FROM A PLATFORM

by James Fraser

The SHOOTING TIMES

and Country Magazine

SEVENTY-FOURTH YEAR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9th, 1956 1s. 3d. WEEKLY

PADDLES DOWN

Parasites and Pestilence

Wild pheasants and partridges are, on the whole, hardy and healthy, but when we start to rear or preserve them in fairly large numbers, maladies sometimes appear. The broody fowls which hatch and rear the young game often carry diseases and parasites and, although they are fairly resistant to their own brands of frightfulness, their young charges may not be. At least we shall be spared these sources of infection when incubator-hatching and brooder-rearing are perfected. In the meantime, most of these setbacks can be avoided if healthy broodies and clean rearing-fields are selected. Turkeys and poultry on free-range can spread diseases in field and covert.

Many reared gamebirds also suffer from digestive ailments. Too much fibre, a lack of suitable protein, or a mineral deficiency—and the result is an unthrifty chick. And instead of culling it—we probably let it be—mistakenly hoping that one day it will "make a bird". With modern scientifically-balanced foods, there is no cause for malnutrition. Chills and the like are common, and are sometimes due to a combination of weak stock and careless management in bad weather but, like human influenza, there are also viruses which seem to become virulent in the autumn.

Although a certain cure for gapes has yet to be discovered, blowing the birds with one of the special powders will cause some of the worms to be coughed up, and is probably better than nothing. Other disorders that are encountered include fungus infections—occurring when birds have access to mouldy heaps of grain or straw – and the incurable poultry leukaemia in its many forms. Although modern drugs are available for checking blackhead and coccidiosis, prevention is better than cure. Infected broodies, weak stock, contaminated ground, poor food and bad management all contribute to disease. Avoidance of these factors is better than all the bottles of pink medicine in the world! Should things go wrong, it is better to send away some fresh specimens for prompt examination by an expert, rather than start sanguinary explorations with a pocket knife.

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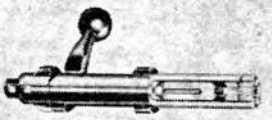
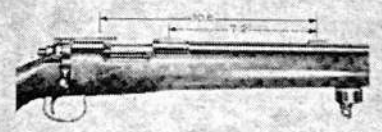
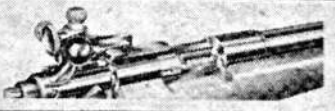
Action	Hardened alloy steel action plus heavy, over-size locking lugs with maximum bearing area insure constant head space over an infinite number of rounds. Bolt is similar to that on Remington Models 721, 722 with "world's strongest bolt action." Close-fitting bolt operates smoothly inside large, sturdy, high-sidewall receiver. Double extractors.	
Scope Mounting	Greater distance than ever between telescope blocks means 50% finer sight adjustment than ever before possible — 6 clicks instead of the conventional 4 per inch at 100 yards. Reduces "sighting-in" errors by more precise control of sight adjustment. Photo at right shows difference between old 7.2" inter-mount radius and new, more efficient, 10.6" inter-mount radius on Model 40X.	
Loading Platform	Model 40X design recognizes modern trend toward furnishing finest match rifles in single-shot only — with no weakening cut-out for magazine. Absolutely straight-line feed with no shaved bullets. Easy to load at shoulder.	
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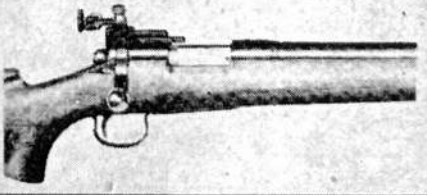
Trigger	*Trigger movement* is internally adjustable to a minimum length of 5 to 7 thousandths of an inch. *Trigger pull* is externally adjustable to whatever weight shooter desires by positive click adjustments; each click is equal to about ¼-pound. *The adjusting screw will not shoot loose.* Lock time is fast — let-off amazingly crisp and clean. "Dry shooting" ("snap shooting") will not harm rifle in any way — 30,000 cycles of operation on test rifle resulted in no breakage or wear, with only occasional oiling required.	

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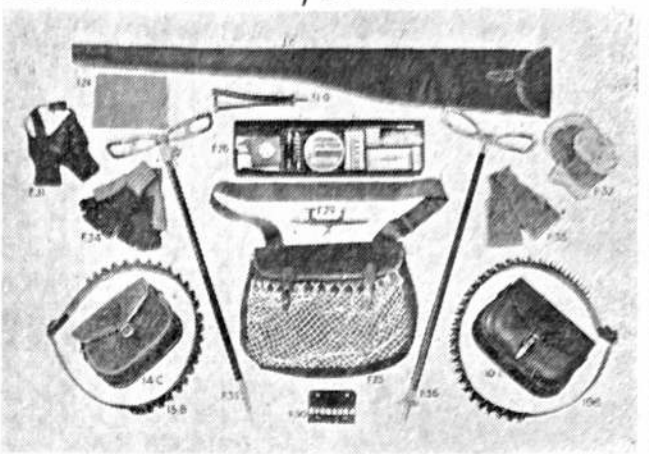

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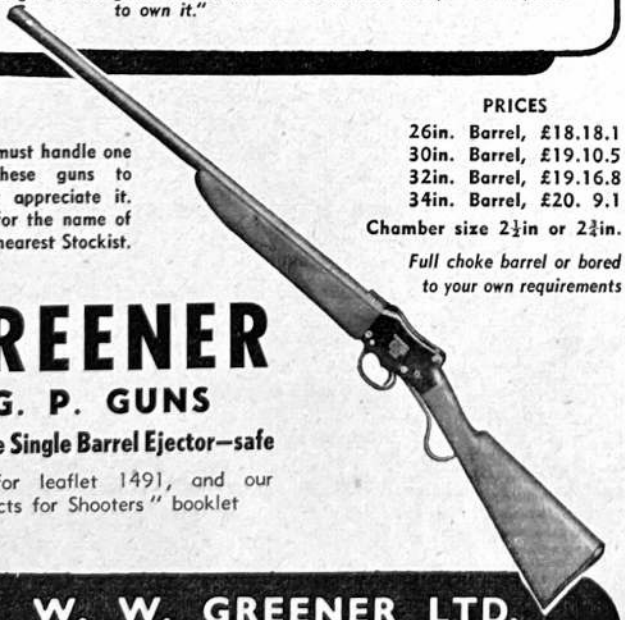

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HISTORY IN THE SALEROOM

HISTORY in the limited sense of the price paid for books may well be made on November 12 and 13, when Sotheby's will sell the library of the late Alfred Denison and a collection of books on natural history formed by an American, Mr. A. W. Bahr.

Denison specialised in books on angling, and the highlights of the sale will be the edition of "The Book of St. Albans" by Wynkyn de Worde which includes "The Treatise of Fishing with an Angle"; and the first five editions of Izaak Walton's "Compleat Angler."

Antiquarian book prices are governed by the ordinary laws of supply and demand. The supply of "The Treatyse" and the first edition of Walton is very low indeed: a strong demand could ensure very high prices. It is understood that the Denison collection was offered for sale by Messrs. Sotheby in 1933, but that the reserve price was not reached on many of the items, including those detailed above.

Readers who are old enough to have had any financial responsibilities in 1933 will remember that money was almost as scarce as first editions, and that although the worst of the great slump was over, few people had money to spare for collector's pieces. It may be a very different story today.

We have no idea what sort of price Wynkyn de Worde's book has commanded, but it is generally said that the value of a first edition of "The Compleat Angler" in good condition lies between £900 and £1,000. The highest price paid so far was £1,290. This was for a perfect copy in the original sheepskin binding, and formed part of the Van Antwerp sale conducted by Sotheby's in 1895.

Book collecting of the sort that fixes the price of a book by its scarcity rather than its contents or the magnificence of its production is hardly more than a hundred years old, and when Charles Lamb wrote to a friend in 1801 discussing and praising "The Compleat Angler" he concluded with the question: "What edition have you got? Is it Hawkins's with plates of Piscator, etc.? That sells very dear." Books were then valued for their binding, plates and appearance, and Hawkins's first edition (1760) was magnificent. The late Eric Parker hazarded the guess that Lamb meant no more than a few pounds, and that the 1760 edition was (in 1801) probably more expensive than Walton's original first edition, fine copies of which, over the next 20 years or so, averaged 70s.

In 1850 a copy sold for £15. In 1877 J. J. Manley wrote: "Perfect copies of the original edition are now worth about £25 to £30. . . . Not long ago, at a public sale, these five editions, [the five published in Walton's lifetime] the copies being perfect, in good preservation and handsomely bound realised £100."

The first "big money" was paid in 1887, when a first edition sold for £200. Only 18 years later the copy already mentioned fetched £1,290.

THE SHOOTING TIMES AND COUNTRY MAGAZINE

Official Organ of THE WILDFOWLERS' ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

No. 3870 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1956 Founded 1882

The wild life of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust. We must account for it to those who come after.—King George VI.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Canadian Wildfowl Prosper

"Wildfowl migration is in progress . . . Most blue-winged teal and pintail have left southern Alberta and south-western Saskatchewan . . . duck continue to pile up on the prairies and geese are moving in from the north . . . southern Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan have duck in fantastic numbers and they are abundant elsewhere . . . There can be little doubt that 1956 is hanging up a new record of wildfowl abundance in western Canada."

Those are highlights of the western Canada wildfowl analysis in the October issue of the Ducks Unlimited (Canada) *Duckological*, prepared by their chief naturalist, Bert W. Cartwright. Mentioning his just-completed 2,000 mile observation trip across the southern prairies, Cartwright states, "Never have I seen more duck since D.U. started work in May, 1938." He also makes the observation, "Given suitable weather, U.S. hunters should have a most satisfactory season."

The report reveals that "bluebird weather" prevails over most of western Canada. Some birds are filtering south, but the great majority are concentrated throughout the prairie region, ready to go south at first sign of wintry blast from the north.

The analysis observes that, with a possible exception of pintail, all species seem to have shared in the upturn of population. There is some doubt that geese improved over last year, but mallard, baldpate, redhead, canvasback, lesser scaup, green-winged teal and gadwall appear to have done very well, particularly the first two species.

English Cookery!

And I don't mean British.

If we have no advice on where to go for a meal we may, in travelling round the country, suffer a good deal from our traditional bad cookery. I have had more than my fill of cabbage-cum-water, but I must admit that I have also had my share of well-cooked meals.

Whatever may be the general standard, England showed something of its native cookery at the Frankfurt International Cookery Competition last month. Eleven nations competed, and English chefs were awarded the four most important gold medals, a Grand Prix, and a silver platter as a prize of honour. Unfortunately I have no space for names and details, but I can say that two of the medallists came from London, one from Birmingham and one from Portsmouth.

Sixteen nations entered for the junior competition. Four British catering students from the Battersea Polytechnic so distinguished themselves that a special silver plate was struck in their honour and presented to them. One of them won a £250 prize.

The senior chefs had to cook national dishes, and steak-and-kidney puddings, duckling and grouse were England's portion. The first two dishes were eaten enthusiastically by the judges, but roast grouse led to ecstasies of praise that are likely to cause a heavy demand for grouse on the Continent next August.

Olympic Games

The British Olympic Shooting Team leaves for Melbourne on Monday next, November 12, and I take this opportunity of wishing them a good journey and success on the Australian ranges. Those who would like to bid members of the team a more personal farewell, have two opportunities to do so on Monday.

The first is at the Lancaster Court Hotel, 69 Lancaster Gate, London, W.2, where the team will assemble at or before 1 p.m. The second is in the Departure Lounge of London Airport shortly before 9 p.m.

Photographs of our clay pigeon and rifle representatives appear on pages 775 and 764.

Expensive Trout

Jackson-Stops' Cirencester office reports one of the most successful sales of trout fishing by auction which they have experienced.

The sale was at Hereford on Wednesday, October 24, and the fishing in question was 1,100 yards, of which about two-thirds was double bank, in the River Arrow at Staunton-on-Arrow (formerly the Stansbatch House Water).

After bidding had begun at £1,000, the price realised, £4,100, shows a figure of well over £6,000 per mile for this water.

The interest in this sale proves yet again the enormous interest in all good fishing and the availability, almost invariably, of substantial sums of money for it.

Flock Shots at Pigeon

Back in August I mentioned, under this heading, the feat of a Yorkshire correspondent who killed 106 pigeon with 13 cartridges. News that eclipses this performance now comes from a reader at Harrow who tells me that the keeper at his home last winter shot 127 pigeon with nine cartridges loaded with No. 5.

Any advance on this new total?

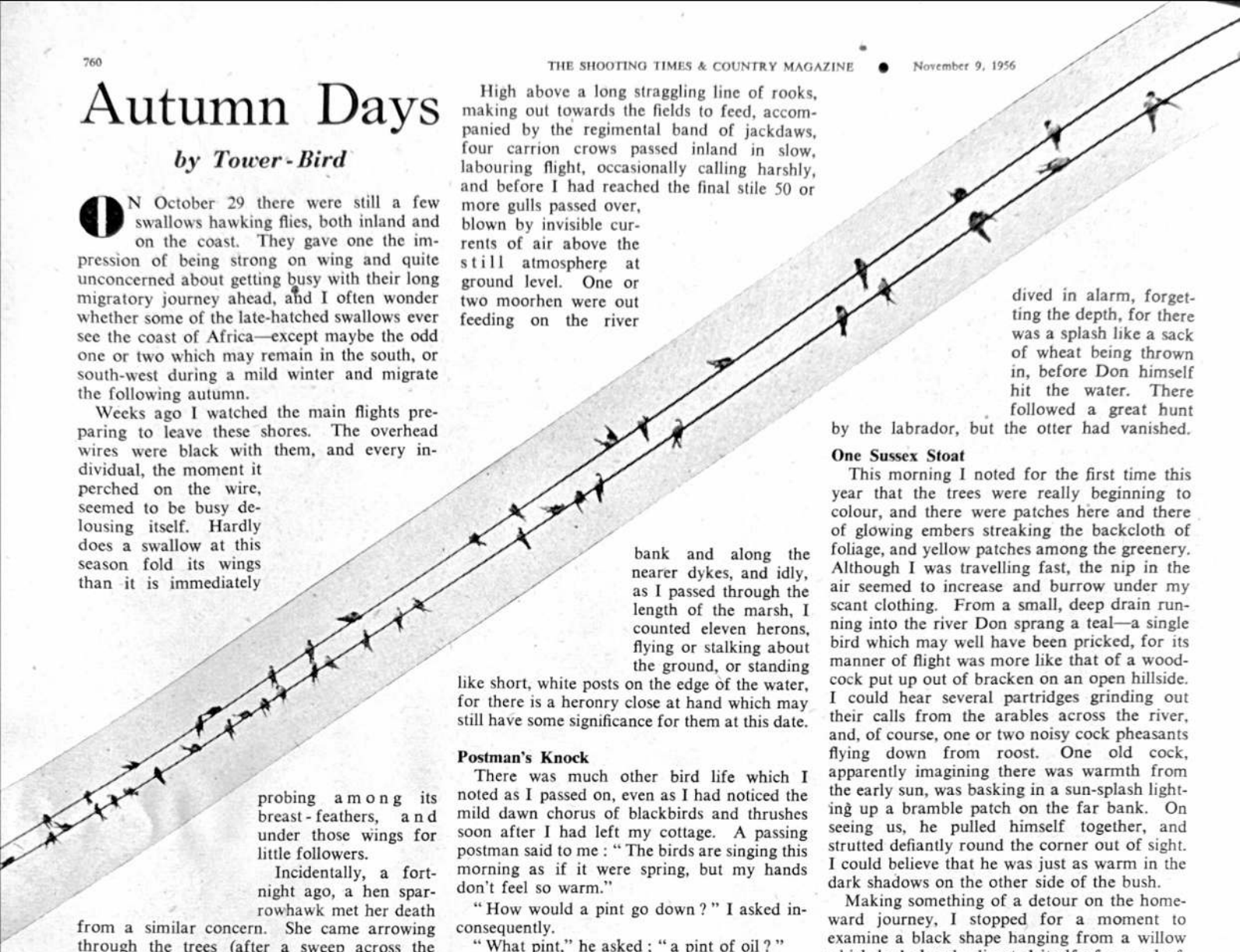
AUCEPS.

Autumn Days

by Tower-Bird

ON October 29 there were still a few swallows hawking flies, both inland and on the coast. They gave one the impression of being strong on wing and quite unconcerned about getting busy with their long migratory journey ahead, and I often wonder whether some of the late-hatched swallows ever see the coast of Africa—except maybe the odd one or two which may remain in the south, or south-west during a mild winter and migrate the following autumn.

Weeks ago I watched the main flights preparing to leave these shores. The overhead wires were black with them, and every individual, the moment it perched on the wire, seemed to be busy delousing itself. Hardly does a swallow at this season fold its wings than it is immediately probing among its breast-feathers, and under those wings for little followers.



Incidentally, a fortnight ago, a hen sparrowhawk met her death from a similar concern. She came arrowing through the trees (after a sweep across the marsh) into the wood where I was waiting for pigeon. She shot up on to the bare branch of a birch, and, instead of looking sharply round to see if danger was near, her beak was among her feathers almost as soon as her toes clasped the birch-bough. I shot quickly and she fell like a wingless plummet to the ground beneath.

First Hard Frost

On the morning of October 26 there was a really sharp frost which cut the remaining runners and the dahlias for six, and even touched the late buds of the chrysanthemums. The marsh grass was white and stiff as I made my way along the river-bank and the sky delicately streaked with pink against an apple-green background. A few mallard rose quacking from a pool in the open and set off for their home waters. Several snipe rasped a good-day—black motes swinging unsteadily against the growing brightness over the far hills, soon to be lost to sight. A party of thirty-odd swans, the wind-music from their heavy wing-beats coming to me from a considerable distance, went stringing out against the dark background of the woods to follow the course of the river until they vanished out of sight round a bend in the rising ground. A small wedge of duck which were probably mallard, but gave the impression of early-arrived wigeon sped across the sky, overtaking a black cloud of patrolling lapwings. Two larks, fighting and chasing, twittered overhead, and three grey wagtails sped in dancing flight over a bed of coarse reed-tussocks, to settle on the cow-dung-caked path on the marsh-wall.

High above a long straggling line of rooks, making out towards the fields to feed, accompanied by the regimental band of jackdaws, four carrion crows passed inland in slow, labouring flight, occasionally calling harshly, and before I had reached the final stile 50 or more gulls passed over, blown by invisible currents of air above the still atmosphere at ground level. One or two moorhen were out feeding on the river bank and along the nearer dykes, and idly, as I passed through the length of the marsh, I counted eleven herons, flying or stalking about the ground, or standing like short, white posts on the edge of the water, for there is a heronry close at hand which may still have some significance for them at this date.

Postman's Knock

There was much other bird life which I noted as I passed on, even as I had noticed the mild dawn chorus of blackbirds and thrushes soon after I had left my cottage. A passing postman said to me : " The birds are singing this morning as if it were spring, but my hands don't feel so warm."

" How would a pint go down ? " I asked inconsequently.

" What pint," he asked ; " a pint of oil ? "

Before he had spoken his last word he was a hundred yards down the street and I do not doubt that some of the sleepers were aroused by our conversation, and glanced hurriedly at their bed-side clocks to see whether they had overslept.

There has been a good run of sea-trout up the river, but no fish of any sort broke the surface this morning. The tide was running out with its usual dignity, now that the flood-water has become part and parcel of the sea. Something came drifting round a corner behind me, and I stopped to watch it, wondering idly whether it was the flat head of an otter. But as it came abreast of me, its dark colour changed to yellow in the growing morning light, and I saw that it was half a grapefruit from which the contents had evidently been spooned.

A few nights earlier, when waiting for duck to flight, I had been standing with Don on the edge of a dyke close to this spot as dusk deepened to darkness. The bank dropped perpendicularly some seven feet down to the sandy-bottomed stream which was about knee-deep. I heard a noise like a terrier would make galloping up the water-way and guessed at once that an otter was approaching. The animal stopped now and again, then came on, hunting along under the banks. It was too dark for me to see it, but as it drew level with us I saw Don's hackles rise and his tail stiffen. " Go on," I said, and the dog jumped straight down into the dyke. An otter under normal circumstances enters the water noiselessly, but here it was shallow and the animal had been taken violently by surprise. Even so, I do not understand how it managed to make such a noise as it crashdived in alarm, forgetting the depth, for there was a splash like a sack of wheat being thrown in, before Don himself hit the water. There followed a great hunt by the labrador, but the otter had vanished.

One Sussex Stoat

This morning I noted for the first time this year that the trees were really beginning to colour, and there were patches here and there of glowing embers streaking the backcloth of foliage, and yellow patches among the greenery. Although I was travelling fast, the nip in the air seemed to increase and burrow under my scant clothing. From a small, deep drain running into the river Don sprang a teal—a single bird which may well have been pricked, for its manner of flight was more like that of a woodcock put up out of bracken on an open hillside. I could hear several partridges grinding out their calls from the arables across the river, and, of course, one or two noisy cock pheasants flying down from roost. One old cock, apparently imagining there was warmth from the early sun, was basking in a sun-splash lighting up a bramble patch on the far bank. On seeing us, he pulled himself together, and strutted defiantly round the corner out of sight. I could believe that he was just as warm in the dark shadows on the other side of the bush.

Making something of a detour on the homeward journey, I stopped for a moment to examine a black shape hanging from a willow which had already divested itself of every leaf. Over three years ago I shot the only stoat I have killed in Sussex, and here was its dried body which had swung madly in many gales, and been washed by tremendous driving rains, just as it was two years and more ago. I had used a rabbit-snare to suspend it from the end of a light branch, after I had shot it galloping along the opposite side of a brook. I wonder how much longer it will remain on its lashing twig.

Cutting across a meadow to my allotment, to dig up a root or two of celery, I found that I could not see the earth for leaves, for a hedge of young poplars had been " moulting " all along the boundary, and a wind had blown much of their fallen foliage on to my plot. That half of the " trench " from which I had already dug celery was an inch or two deep in leaves, and it struck me that no manure will be needed in it next year.

Yet while a few trees are naked, and others moulting hard, many of the larger ones, particularly the oaks and elms are barely "turning," though now that frosts have arrived with something of a kick in them, there will soon be a different story to tell.

Anyway, here's one who is hoping for a hard winter, a really hard one. And I'm betting on it. I never want to see another winter like a fairly recent one, when my neighbour's broad-beans were black with fly on Christmas day !

* * *

This evening, after writing the above, I was searching a drain at deep dusk for a duck winged on the previous evening, when the whistle of wigeon overhead made me look up. These were the first I had seen inland this season, and their return acted as a real tonic.

Lore of the Land

by John Muers Raby

I WAS interested to read in *The Times* that corn crop yields this year are likely to be much higher than was at one time thought possible, having regard to the appalling weather during harvest time. This news is of particular interest from the rabbit damage angle. In 1955, the first year of almost total freedom from rabbits, the suggestion that the high harvest yields were attributable to any cause other than the remarkably fine weather was generally pooh-poohed by the pro-rabbit fraternity. But after one of the foulest seasons on record estimated yields of wheat and barley, although for obvious reasons not as high as those of 1955, are still well above the average for the last ten years, and yields of oats are equal to that average. The inference seems to be that the absence of rabbits is having a more marked influence on grain yields than many shooting men are prepared to admit.

But, of course, there is no doubt at all that the rabbit is still with us on an increasing scale. When last winter's snow was lying there were few farms in this district which could not produce at least one example of the once familiar spoor, and shooting over a friend's farm the other day, I saw at least a dozen rabbits flushed. Whether it was by accident or design that only one found its way into the bag I would not know !

There is one—and probably only one—thing to be said for the absence of rabbits on shooting days: it makes for greater safety. Whilst the majority of shots taken at birds are sufficiently angled to be harmless the same cannot always be said of shots at ground game in close country, and I in nowise miss the doubtful pleasure of having the occasional rabbit taken almost literally off my toes while a beating gun. Some of these kills were, no doubt, pretty snap shots, but it would have been better for my own peace of mind and everyone else's too if they had never been fired. Moreover, I know of at least one good dog which would still be alive today had myxomatosis arrived a year earlier. It rather sounds as if the shooting company I keep is altogether deplorable, but such incidents are fortunately few and far between and must come the way of all men who shoot regularly over the years.

Dangerous Shots

Even so I am constantly astonished, and not a little frightened, by the failure of guns who should know better to take the most elementary safety precautions. One inevitably has one's nerves set on edge by the occasional tyro, but I refer to experienced shots to whom one would have thought safety was so much a matter of second nature as to render them incapable of transgressing. Unhappily this is not the case. I have twice walked-up partridges this season with a man who persistently held his gun across his body "at the ready" with the barrels pointing down the line. To aggravate matters this man's natural walk involved a kind of swaying motion which ensured that every time his right foot reached the ground his gun pointed fairly and squarely at his left-hand neighbour. On enquiry I was assured that this menace had handled a gun all his life, and his very high standard of shooting left little doubt that this was true. Be that as it may, after studying the printing on his cartridge wads for the duration of one drive I unashamedly employed every device I know, fair or unfair, to ensure that I walked on his right in the line.

* * *

After a very late start to the growing season, when the grass did come it came so quickly and in such profusion as to be something of an embarrassment to many of us, especially in a wet summer like this has been. It is not always easy to re-organise one's stocking to deal with such a contingency and with the credit-squeeze clamped firmly on, the forty or fifty extra bullocks required to cope with the situation are likely to prove no more than a beautiful dream from which one emerges somewhat violently in the Bank Manager's office. The only answer then is more hay or more silage. Hay always attracts me more, both for its keeping qualities and its ready cashability, but this year it became abundantly clear by mid-August that further haymaking was a fool's fantasy. So silage it had to be, and I now find myself with several hundred tons over and above what we can reasonably expect to need and still making the confounded stuff.

Myxomatosis put an end to the harvest field melée.

Breach of Good Husbandry

But I did take the precaution of putting the surplus next to a good hard road and I have already been approached by a potential purchaser. Selling fodder off the farm rather goes against the grain as a breach of the rules of good husbandry, but in present circumstances it might well be both better farming and better business to sell it before it is subjected to the deteriorating influence of the time it might have to withstand before we could use it.

* * *

I wrote in this column not very long ago of the poaching propensities of one of our farm cats, Blackie, and forecast for him a sudden and violent end on some neighbouring holding where the occupier "likes to have a bird or two about the place." Blackie has now indeed disappeared but, I suspect, for quite another reason. We recently acquired a Jack Russell terrier pup and I believe that Blackie, having for some years been unceremoniously bundled out of the garden on sight by my own dog, felt that another addition to the canine community was just too much. Not that there was any real enmity between Blackie and the dogs, for they always returned to heel after his removal with that smug air of a legitimate, but tedious duty well performed rather than one of bloodthirsty triumph.

But the point of interest is that the terrier promises to be a worthy and adequate successor to the animal he has displaced. At ten weeks of age he killed his first mouse and now hunts assiduously any territory likely to hold mice to the extent that those he has not accounted for have lost no time in "slinging their hooks." At the moment the farm appears to be ratless, but for once I am rather looking forward to the customary winter invasion to see how the terrier deals with it. He seems to me to be endowed with all the qualities that go to make a first-class ratter.

A Terrier Story

And this brings me to a story about these game little dogs which I have recorded elsewhere, but since it is based on a personal experience I see no harm in repeating it. At a meet of our local hunt the terriers were in charge of a girl who had them on leads. An interested spectator standing nearby enquired of her, "Are these dogs Jack Russells ?"

"Certainly not," replied the afronted custodian. "They belong to the Hunt" !

* * *

And now, to conclude, I humbly don the traditional sackcloth and ashes ! The Fatstock Marketing Corporation is very angry with me over some comments which appeared previously in these notes (August 31) suggesting that the Corporation was engaged in the meat import business. I am now assured that no foreign meat is in fact imported by the Corporation, other than a part of the normal New Zealand lamb trade with this country. That being the case I offer the Corporation three rousing cheers and an unqualified apology for any reflection I may have cast upon its policy or actions in this respect.

In the Kitchen

By PENELOPE TURING

Every time I eat roast pheasant I become more convinced (provided the cook knows his or her job) that it is a dish fit for kings, or Izaak Walton's anglers, or very honest men. It is one of the simplest birds to cook, but must be just right.

Tie a rasher of fat bacon over the breast of the bird before putting it into the oven, as this prevents it from getting too dry. A moderately hot oven is needed, and the pheasant should be basted frequently with butter or dripping during cooking, which takes half to three-quarters of an hour according to the size of the bird. Just before it is done remove the bacon so that the breast gets nicely browned. Untruss it, stick a few feathers into the tail-end, and serve with a good brown gravy, fried breadcrumbs and bread sauce (for which I gave a recipe on August 10).

Fried breadcrumbs. Rub some stale white bread through a sieve until you have a large breakfast cupful of fine crumbs. Then melt one ounce of margarine or cooking fat in a frying pan, add the breadcrumbs and stir gently until all the fat is absorbed and the crumbs are dry, crisp and a light golden brown. Drain on paper before serving.

Ptarmigan en Casserole. Cut up a brace of ptarmigan into small pieces and put them into a casserole with 1½oz. of butter. Turn the meat well in this and then add 1oz. of flour and fry until a light brown. Now pour in half a pint or rather more stock, add a small onion, a sprig each of parsley and thyme, one teaspoonful of red currant jelly and one teaspoonful of Worcestershire sauce. Cover, and cook in the oven for rather over half an hour. Add a little red wine before serving, and some thickening if necessary, as the gravy is a most important part of this dish.

The Young Shot

Calls of the Wild

by Petrel

THE toy-shop assistant gave me a look that plainly said, "You're crazy." And well he might, for any resemblance between myself and a customer for a baby's rattle would have been stretching the bounds of coincidence.

Not that I knew the article in question to be a baby's rattle. As far as I was concerned, it was a duck, and a realistic looking one at that, and cheap too, only 3s. 3d., and I had seen it in the window a week earlier when I passed the shop on the way to the train. On this occasion it was not on show, but by explanation and sign language I made quite clear what I wanted, and sympathetically, I thought, the assistant produced the celluloid effigy from a drawer. He said nothing, but I could feel him thinking plenty when I placed it on the floor and viewed it from all angles. Eventually I put him out of his agony. "It may sound silly to you," I said, "but I'm considering the possibility of painting some of these and using them as decoys on flooded meadows."

It was his turn to surprise me. "Hmm," he replied, "Won't they be a bit small? Still I suppose they would do for teal." There followed a discussion on decoying, and I left the shop with two duck rattles and the promise to report on the result of my experiment. What a salesman!

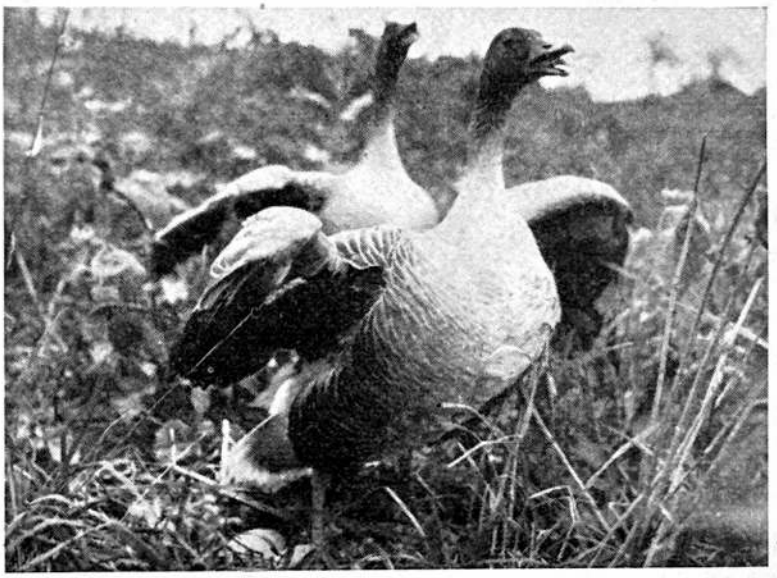
I think there are possibilities here, especially for anyone who shoots where there are plenty of teal. In fact it might be more correct to say that the possibilities are limited to teal, for while teal and other duck will come in to larger decoys, such as mallard or wigeon, the reverse is by no means true. And this is understandable, for teal are interfering, quarrelsome little birds, that disturb the peaceful feeding of mallard which can hardly be blamed for refusing to consort with them if there is any other suitable water available.

I use regularly two other items of shooting equipment which came my way indirectly, *via* toy shops. They comprise a dog whistle and a wigeon call, both of which were contained in Christmas crackers. From the same source I also acquired a most excellent screech-owl call, but this is of very little value since the occasions on which I wish to carry on a conversation with a screech-owl are very few and far between.

Big Business

I do not think that we pay enough attention to the use of decoy calls in this country. One has only to watch an expert in the art of calling at work—and it is an art, achieved only after long practice and close contact with the birds themselves—to realise how effectively duck and geese and vermin can be brought within shooting range by this method. None of this is lost on American hunters, who are so keen on calling, I understand, that more than five hundred firms are engaged in the production of calls of various sorts. Moreover, duck and goose-calling contests are common features of American shooting life, and big business to boot, with first prizes running into thousands of dollars. The nearest we get to this sort of thing is the annual hunting-horn blowing contest at the *Horse and Hound* ball. Why do not wildfowling clubs stage such competitions at their annual dinners—or do any of them? And why not a W.A.G.B.I. championship cup for calling; with two classes: (1) using *vox humana* and (2) employing a manufactured call?

It is possible, in this country, to buy a call which represents the noise made by almost every bird, and by several animals. Armed with the appropriate "blower" the tyro imagines that he has only to puff and blow according to the directions and he will bring the house down, but, unlike the manufacturers who are careful and wise in such matters, he forgets a most important point. If he reads the instructions carefully, the amateur caller will discover the sound advice that while the calls, if correctly blown, will produce an appropriate noise, practice combined with a study of the right bird-call is the only way in which to achieve best results. I have seen pigeon shooters set up shop beside a field of kale in midwinter confident that the call suspended from their necks will induce every bird within five miles to pitch within range. Puffing out their cheeks they blow a most mellow and melodious note, but it makes no difference at all. Which is hardly surprising, for the roosting spring song which they produce is hardly in keeping with the surroundings.



Duet for two pinkfeet.

The Right Message

Unless you know the message of the moment, any call, be it naturally vocal or artificial, is quite useless. Mallard provide a case in point. It is not difficult to produce a long-drawn-out single *quaack* with a duck call. Do so by all means, but don't blame me or the call when every bird on the pond takes wing, and those that have set their wings and are thinking of pitching, suddenly flare upwards and sheer off at high speed.

You have got it wrong. A single short, sharp *quack* would have allayed their suspicions for it is quite different from the longer alarm call, and the five-note, *"Quaaack, quaack, quaack, quack, quack,"* would have signified, "All's well down here. Let's enjoy ourselves and make hay with the acorns, or the barley, or whatever the rich feeding happens to provide."

And do not forget that purring chatter, probably one of the most difficult duck noises to reproduce, which is voiced by mallard, teal and wigeon ducks in flight. The whistles of the latter two species are simple enough to reproduce—that is the drake voices. A wigeon whistle is easily made by brazing two brass 12-bore cartridge bases together, caps removed, and sucking through the holes, or by wedging a 16-bore brass cartridge head into a 12-bore base in a similar manner, but in my opinion this is a waste of time when one can buy the finished article from most gunsmiths as cheaply as 7d. With a knowledge of the calls, it is possible, on these cheap instruments, to reproduce wigeon, teal, curlew and redshank whistles. Of course, the first requirement of any budding caller is that he must have an averagely musical ear. The tone deaf fowler is at a great disadvantage, and again I know men who just cannot produce any semblance of the right note when they are off the marsh. Put them amongst the birds and after listening attentively for some time they will be able to render a fair imitation.

Variations on a Theme

The noise that he thinks he is making and which sounds right to his own ears does not always necessarily sound the same to his audience, or presumably, to the birds. This was demonstrated to me very clearly last week-end, when after the day's shooting and a most excellent dinner, our host produced a tape recording machine. In turn we each rendered our versions of various calls vocally and with whistles. When these were played back the variations were considerable, and what seemed right to one person sounded quite w r o n g to another. But, even so, I do not think that the difference was great enough to warrant the remark, "Something w e n t wrong with that wigeon," after my redshank solo.

Since writing the foregoing I have had the opportunity of testing a crow call which a kind friend recently presented to me. As soon as I tried to play the scales on it I had some second thoughts about his kindness, for here, it seemed, was a highly complicated call, and none of the noises that I was able to coax from it sounded very much like those made by crows, rooks, magpies, jackdaws or jays, for all of which it claimed to be successful.

However, after much ear-splitting practice in secret places, I could croak something like a crow and scream like a rook in pain, so I determined to give the instrument a trial.

From my ambush in a thicket I shattered the early morning silence with three unearthly squawks. The answer was immediate and surprising.

Out of nowhere there appeared a mobbing, shouting pack of rooks and jackdaws, and louder and much closer, a party of magpies at least six strong (counted), two of which I shot at a range of no more than ten yards.

Considering the inquisitive nature of the whole crow tribe, I wonder whether calls for this species need to be particularly accurate. An American contemporary tells me that all you have to do is to keep on blowing and shooting until your barrels get red-hot. Maybe, but you will need a pair of ear-plugs.

Gamekeepers rest after a forenoon shoot in Yorkshire.

Round the Game Preserves

by David Imrie

YOUNG men, and men who are not so young, decide to become gamekeepers because they like the open air, the opportunity to study wild life, the freedom from set hours of work, the prospect of rearing game, or the chance to get shooting gratis in a country where this sport generally costs money. It is hardly necessary to point out that the last reason is the least laudable one, for the man who takes up a job merely to get as much cheap shooting as possible is not likely to be a first-class gamekeeper. Certainly every gamekeeper must have an intense interest in shooting; but that interest ought to be used to provide shooting for other people.

It is, of course, perfectly reasonable for any gamekeeper to find enjoyment in the shooting which comes legitimately his way. My reproof is directed solely at those few "sporting" gamekeepers who are allowed by their employers to kill game and who are so greedy for sport that they will destroy anything on the estate, if their jobs are not imperilled thereby. Those men are usually careful not to shoot too much of the main game stock; but they will pursue the rarer items to extinction. Unless they have alert employers, they will bang away at blackgame, capercaillie, woodcock, hill partridges, and grouse also where grouse are not of great importance.

Once I heard of a gamekeeper who was asked to get a few partridges on an estate where those birds seldom figured in the bags of organised shoots. And he took full advantage of the chance to get a bit of sport. There were only three coveys all told in several root fields; but he chased them backwards and forwards until the families were broken up, then he followed the last chirp. He made a very good bag indeed, and his employer was greatly pleased to discover that his land could produce such a number of partridges, although he had grown too old to pursue them himself in that place. The sad truth is, however, that no partridges were ever seen again in those fields.

Such Keepers Are Rare

One may say that the gamekeeper was justified in shooting the most of those three coveys, even if the few survivors did vanish, either down the throats of vermin or in search of healthier surroundings. His employer was pleased, and that was apparently the main point. Nevertheless, I say that the gamekeeper ought to have lived up to his name. He could have shot a couple of brace, and left the rest to breed. Even if the estate was not normally favoured by partridges, it was the man's duty to protect a breeding stock with his utmost skill.

Shooting in this reckless fashion, as I have already said, is the least laudable trait in a gamekeeper; but fortunately it is not common. Velveteens is generally so fearful of losing a breeding stock of any kind of game that he will often try to persuade his employer not to shoot when shooting would do no harm whatever. And he is himself reluctant, as a rule, to shoot his own game; but despite this, many gamekeepers manage to get quite a lot of game shooting during their careers. They have to get birds for the cook's larder and for presents to their employer's friends at odd times. In addition to this, they get much more shooting at rabbits, pigeon, and wildfowl, plus the inevitable shooting at vermin, which can be real sport too.

A Youth Graduates

But the amount of shooting available to a gamekeeper will vary with different estates and with the age of the man. The youth who assists a headkeeper will be lucky if he gets a shot at game, because he practically never has a game licence. He begins with occasional shots at rabbits (sitters at first) which will be used as ferret feed. Then he may be asked to get a few pigeon some evening. This is a great occasion. The youth stalks his quarry generally in a covert of tall conifers, and he discovers that a shotgun has a limited range when he fails to bring down birds from the tips of tall spruces. If he has not the courage to fire at flying pigeon, he may feel more confident when he gets a chance at rising duck in the early part of the season. At least, this was my experience. My first successful flying shot was at a duck, which rose from a weedy burn one August day. Since then I have seldom made a more satisfying shot at anything.

When the youth moves on to another estate, still as a headkeeper's assistant, he will probably be fairly proficient at running and flying targets; so his shooting activities are likely to be extended. Depending on the geographical position of the estate, he will perhaps be allowed to be a gun at white hare and roe deer shoots, at forays in search of capercaillie, blackgame, woodcock, snipe, golden plover, duck, wild geese, pigeon and brown hares. Only rarely will he get a chance to shoot pheasants, partridges, and grouse; but in byegone times he probably did a lot of rabbit shooting, either with the help of beaters, dogs, or ferrets. If he lands in a northern grouse moor *cum* deer forest, he will also get some stalking.

As a married beat man the gamekeeper does not normally get more shooting than he did formerly. He may be asked now and then to bring in to the Kennels a brace of game birds from his own ground; but the headkeeper generally gets those items himself. He is the man who gets most of the game shooting, apart from his employer and the guests. I even knew one headkeeper who invariably shot as a guest with the shooting tenants. No doubt, he liked a bit of sport, but whether or not this arrangement suited him I never discovered. One suspects that he would rather have done his shooting alone or with men of his own kind.

The Most Difficult Shot

In abnormal times and situations some keepers find that they have to do a tremendous amout of game shooting. During the early part of the war several moorland men and I shot grouse day after day in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Sometimes we had local shooters to help us; sometimes we had none. But we drove our birds all the time. I formed the opinion then that a driven grouse is the most difficult game bird to hit, if it is coming over the butt on a gale. It can also be a tricky shot, if it is coming below the level of the butt coping against a gale.

For a few years previous to this grouse shooting period I shot pheasants, duck, and sundry items almost every week during the season. In one diary I see that I accounted for 120 pheasants in a season, which represents a considerable number of forays at a brace or a couple of brace each time. Those birds, and many others, were shot mostly on an inland bog, where rushes and old, brambly fences made retrieving difficult. Therefore, I found that I had fewer disappointments if I adopted a technique which would have horrified an orthodox dog trainer. I let my bitch roam about within shooting range, then when she struck a scent I followed her, often at full speed, until she flushed her quarry. As soon as the shot bird struck the ground she was there ready to retrieve it. In this fashion I saved time and game.

But my game shooting, although it has been varied and extensive, has never degenerated into a reckless massacre. I have always borne in mind that a breeding stock of game must be maintained at all costs, otherwise there may be trouble for myself in the future. And even if there could be no possibility of trouble, I believe that game of lesser importance ought to be encouraged, because it might multiply with proper help. After all, a gamekeeper is a keeper of game above everything else in his daily work, and only a destroyer in strict moderation, except when he is dealing with vermin.

In the sphere of vermin destruction he can be as greedy for shooting as he likes without wasting cartridges; but it is unfortunately true that vermin shooting lacks the glamour of game shooting. One has only to see how many guests at an organised covert shoot consistently ignore magpies, sparrowhawks, and jays to realise this psychological fact. Nevertheless, there is sport in vermin shooting for the man who has got the genuine instinct for preserving game, and if a fair share of the other kind comes his way legitimately, well, so much the better.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters and photographs are invited for this page. They should be as brief as possible, and the names and addresses of senders must be given, though these need not necessarily be published. Correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, The Shooting Times & Country Magazine, 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1. 'Phone: HYDe Park 2556/2557.

KEEPERS PAST AND PRESENT

Sir,—I read David Imrie's article, and the criticism of it in last week's issue by "Cervus." It seems pretty obvious that the former is a far more experienced keeper than the latter, possibly because of age-difference.

My own experiences over nearly forty years point to the fact that, while many employers are generous enough in various ways, there are also many, if rabbits are sold from an estate, who will allow their keepers only, say, one a week, or none at all. One employer I worked for, catching rabbits at 1s. a couple, would go out of his way to "set traps" to discover if every rabbit caught was sent to the market. Another employer *gave* the three of us all the rabbits we could catch, with the proviso that our rabbit-catching did not unduly interfere with our work. Needless to say, we put our most exceptional employer's interests first.

But, particularly pre-war, I would say that Mr. Imrie is correct in what he says. Employers who would buy "rubbishy" pheasant chick feed in order to save a few shillings, would not be likely to trust a keeper with "unlimited" rabbits. To me, it seems that "Cervus" has been lucky, and that "Cervus" is probably young.

H.K.,
Oxfordshire.

Sir,—In the issue for November 2, "Cervus" takes me to task for suggesting that landowners have put a higher value on rabbits in recent years than they did formerly. Does he seriously mean to say that they have, in many cases, commercialised their estates to the utmost, and neglected to exploit this source of revenue, which can often pay the greater part of a keeper's wages?

In pre-war days a headkeeper had generally power to dispose of a few rabbits, to certain people only, without consulting anyone. And he could use as many as he liked to feed ferrets and dogs, and to bait vermin traps. He also had a rabbit for himself when he felt inclined; but this perquisite was seldom, if ever, part of his agreement when he was engaged.

At no time have I known, or heard of, a headkeeper who could dispose of rabbits *carte blanche*, and the majority of keepers were reluctant to be too generous with their employer's property just in case someone said that they were selling rabbits for their own profit.

If any keeper retained his old-fashioned attitude towards rabbits during the lean years when they reached the price of 14s. per couple retail, he had either (1) an employer who had escaped the financial pinch; (2) an employer who was exceptionally easy-going, or (3) an employer who knew little or nothing of this part of his keeper's activities.

DAVID IMRIE,
Cumberland.

J. Wheater (above) and E. Fear who fly to Melbourne on Monday, November 12, to represent Great Britain in the Olympic Clay Pigeon Shooting events, which take place on November 30 and December 1 (100 birds each day). See "Notes and Comments" in this issue.

A WILDFOWLER'S GUIDE

Sir,—There has appeared in your journal a query as to a "Wildfowler's Guide." Why not form a company of enterprising, knowledgeable wildfowlers to capture large numbers of geese and duck? These birds can then be packed in suitable boxes and despatched by request to any "sportsman" who so wishes.

Thus, the need for a guide becomes non-existent and both time and money are saved in travelling to fowling grounds. Indeed, a person taking advantage of these facilities can shoot his birds from the comfort of his armchair!

To be a litle more serious, really one needs go no further than the pages of the "S.T." to gain a fair amount of information as to the whereabouts of fowling grounds. In fact, some recent contributors have tended to be a trifle too helpful and go to great lengths to give the exact location of their own favourite hides or marshes (and, incidentally, sometimes mine!). Surely a brief description is sufficient.

I am not being selfish I hope, but if the beginner is the "right type" he will become a fowler on the minimum of help. With the increase of transport, undesirable characters are, I fear, attracted towards the marshes. For the second season I have seen a rifle being used on wildfowl.

My "Wildfowler's Guide" is this: A genuine love of the sport and the environment to which it leads you, and a lot of enthusiasm. Have these and you will go far.

D. ALLEN,
Parkside, Seaham.

Sir,—In reply to Mr. Bunney's letter (issue October 26), if he were to read my letter again he would find that I particularly specified that the publication should be made available to members of wildfowling clubs *only*.

He mentions being unable to put a wigeon (a visitor) back in the air. Does he do anything to increase the amount of these visitors in the air?

I successfully "watched over" three sittings of wild mallard, from sitting stage to three-parts grown, on a lake on my rough shoot, during the course of which I accounted for 17 jays, 5 magpies and one fox, which, incidentally, I happened to catch in the act of attacking one of the sitting birds. These birds raised families of eleven, nine and eight.

Plans are also under way for the rearing of up to forty birds next season.

I do not begrudge my coastal compatriots the advantages. After all someone has to live inland, but if Mr. Bunney is a member of W.A.G.B.I. I suggest that he reads up the information in his membership card with special reference to lines, 21, 22 and 23. I am sure helping fellow members comes under these headings.

I am sorry to disagree with Mr. Bunney on all his points, but I still find where to shoot (on the coast) is the hardest trick of the trade of wildfowling.

Lastly I would like to thank you, Sir, for your footnote with which even Mr. Bunney must agree.

P. C. HARRIS,
Tongham, Surrey.

SWANS AND HELICOPTERS

Sir,—Looking at the illustration of the "fall" of swans at Pagham Harbour, in the article "Old Sussex Annals," by "Sea-Pie" (issue October 26), I am reminded that a few weeks ago I was standing at this spot watching a helicopter patrolling the coastline at low level. Apart from a number of small waders, the only birds to get seriously excited as the strange, noisy machine passed along, were the swans, which left the water in panic. Duck on the harbour remained undisturbed.

J. BROWN,
Littlehampton.

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New Books

The Open Sea, by Alister Hardy (Collins, 30s.). The sub-title of this latest volume of the publisher's famous New Naturalist Library is "The World of Plankton," and, as the editors write in their Preface, they have found this remarkable book very difficult to introduce with the ordinary scientific restraint. For they believe it to be (and no doubt rightly) the greatest general work on the subject even written. The author, like the most distinguished marine naturalists in Britain, has been associated with the explorations of the Royal Navy's Surveying Service and with the Marine Biology Stations of our coast.

In this book of well over 300 pages, illustrated with 142 watercolour drawings by the author, 67 photographs in black and white, and 300 line drawings and maps, Professor Hardy describes the relatively unknown and mysterious world of plankton (a task which the greatest marine zoologists might well boggle at), emphasising from the start that plankton is to the sea what vegetation is to the land. Never before has such a synthesis of knowledge been attempted in a community of animals so mysterious yet so important. Yet the author has written this great work in such a simple way that the layman is held fascinated by the subject and can clearly discern the pattern of life which dominates two-thirds of the world's surface.

The second part of "The Open Sea" concerns the open sea's fish and fisheries, and will be published some time in 1957, or early 1958, for so enthusiastic was the author in the writing of this work that two books have been found necessary adequately to cover the ground, and, like the first, the second will be illustrated by Professor Hardy's own colour paintings.

There is no doubt at all that those who read the present volume will never rest content until the second one is published and is in their hands, for it is difficult to imagine a more interesting and enlightening subject—particularly in these days of popular underwater exploration.

The Search For the Little Yellow Men, by Macdonald Hastings (An *Eagle* Book: Hulton Press, 9s. 6d.). This book for boys is written by the well-known broadcaster, author, and journalist, whose uncle (also a famous broadcaster), Major Lewis Hastings, hard-bitten soldier and big game hunter, encouraged his nephew to go on this particular adventurous journey, and lent him two of his own game rifles—a seven millimetre ("the ideal weapon for all soft-skinned animals") and a Jeffery's .404 ("which you will need for hard-skinned animals").

This book, very fully illustrated with intimate photographs of the journey by the expedition's photographer Chris Ware, and packed with exciting incidents, is the report of the journey into the Kalshari Desert in October-November, 1954.

It will be remembered that a series of programmes on B.B.C. television gave an account, of a well-furnished expedition led by the distinguished explorer, Colonel Laurens Van Der Post in the same country. "Mac." Hastings, in this book, tells his story from the point of view of somebody who has never been to Africa before. In spite of that, this lanky, humorous, happy-go-lucky sportsman and really good shot (the reviewer has shot with him enough times in this country to realise that) trekked 1,500 miles through the Kalshari in a single second-hand truck. His only companions were the photographer, a 20 - year - old Rhodesian motor mechanic, and two African boys. It is the measure of his achievement that he established contact wtih the primitive bushmen and successfully negotiated a terrain which is generally regarded as being among the most hazardous in the world. But that is "Mac" all over!

A final and pathetic word concerning the little yellow men who are stone-age pygmies. I quote: "When the Dutch first went to South Africa, they shot the bushman because the poor litle men, not knowing the difference between domestic animals and game, used to hunt the cattle and sheep. Later, they were thinned out again by smallpox . . ." Today, it can be assumed, there are probably not more than 1,000 of them left, spread over an area of about 350,000 square miles.

Signposts To The Wild, by E. D. Tinne (Bell, 11s. 6d.). This is no ordinary nature book; nor is it a text book of natural history. Rather is it seventeen short essays by the author (who has delightfully illustrated his book) describing his personal experiences with various species of animal and bird.

Here is first-hand knowledge very well served up, and accurately so, for the benefit of young would-be naturalists. It is instructional, but most pleasantly so, and the true stories, and the manner of their telling, will please and educate every child with a bent towards country life and natural history.

It is certainly a book which can be recommended as a gift to youthful country boys and girls, and also to their town cousins.

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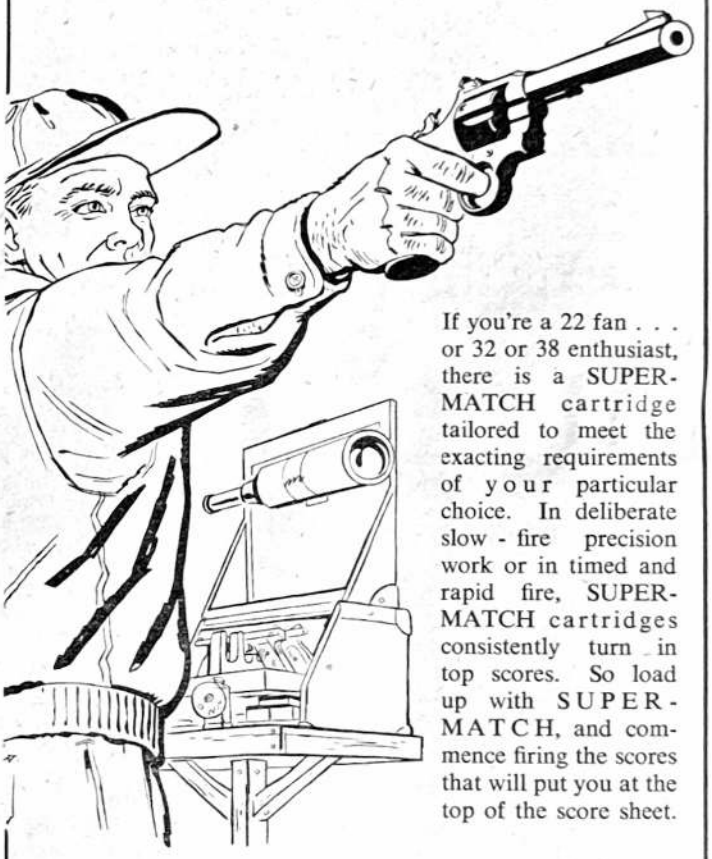

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Towing the salvaged Norwegian sealer "Jopeter" through the Greenland ice belt.

Expedition to N.-E. Greenland

(Concluded)

by Tom Wright

I KNEW that the Polarbjorn was due at Myggbukta after about five days, having completed its duties further north, and I hoped that we might contact the ship before it left on its way south. As we could do no further useful work in this area would it be possible for us to go ashore at other possible goose areas? Captain Giaever, who had extended to us the kindest and most sympathetic co-operation from the very beginning, said he would do everything in his power to help. It was decided that James would accompany the Polarbjorn on its 120 miles trip south to Antarctic Harbour, where he would be able to obtain information about the geese in Jameson Land, one of the best known breeding grounds of the pinkfeet. The other five of us would be dropped at the head of Deusen fjord in Ymers Island, one of the inner islands. As far as we could find from the literature, geese were not known to breed on any scale on the inner islands. But, as Captain Giaever pointed out, the spring comes earliest in the inner fjord regions away from the coast and influence of the ice belt. Therefore it would be of little value to go to a likely spot on the outer coastal belt where the story would most certainly be the same as where we were now.

At the Myggbukta meteorological station we were told that the spring and early summer had in fact been one of the coldest for many years. The winter snow cover did not melt this year until the middle of June, a good three weeks later than usual. Severe night and day frost and blizzards continued well on into that month. The geese usually arrive sometime towards the end of May, when they immediately get to work in finding a nesting site. The breeding cycle of the geese must have been upset this year by the unprecedented conditions. When the conditions were favourable later it was too late. The stimulus had gone and the geese were by now moulting.

Trapping News

Whilst we were at Myggbukta one of the trappers who was there told me some interesting facts about the trapping. The previous winter had been a very poor one and the average number of Arctic foxes caught was about 50 per trapper. In a good year the number may be more like 150. The foxes depend on the small rodent, the lemming, which is their main food. Every four years the population of the lemming reaches a maximum, and the numbers then quickly tail off to a minimum. When there is a large number of lemming there are many foxes, but as the lemming decrease so do the foxes. Each trapper has a large coastal beat. He may have as many as 24 small huts each ten miles or more apart. Over the area there will be as many as 150 fox traps. He travels from hut to hut by Nansen sledge pulled by a team of six or eight husky dogs. On his way he visits each trap and resets it.

Figure of 4 Traps

The trap (a figure of 4) consists of a flat wooden structure about three feet square. This is inclined and set in the inclined position by means of three pieces of wood fitting into notches and delicately balanced. On one of the pieces of wood is placed the meat bait which rests quite near the hinge of the main wooden plate (underneath it). On top of the wood are placed many heavy stones weighing perhaps as much as two hundredweight. When the fox pulls at the bait the great weight collapses on to his neck and kills him instantly. A few years ago a trapper could expect to get up to 100 kroner (£5) for a good white fur, but today he will get only about 30 kroner owing to changes of fashion.

In years when there are many lemming, snowy owls are also very common. As many as ten have been seen at once sitting on the radio aerial at Myggbukta, but this year, unfortunately, we saw none.

The trappers feed their dogs on seal meat, dried fish, or musk ox. Supplies of dried fish are left by the expedition ship when it visits the stations in the summer. Seals are shot during the autumn, winter and spring and the meat forms a most important source of dog food. Musk ox are very hardy, large and shaggy animals and they are increasing steadily. They feed on vegetation and can only thrive in countries where the winter is severe. In west Greenland, where attempts have been made to introduce them, they cannot survive the winter effectively.

This is due to the fact that periodical mild spells of weather are likely to occur at any time. These partially thaw the snow, which soon freezes again. The firm hard crust formed prevents the ox from nosing their way through to the vegetation below and as a result they die through starvation In Spitzbergen, where they are able to maintain themselves, periodical mild winters result in serious checks on the population.

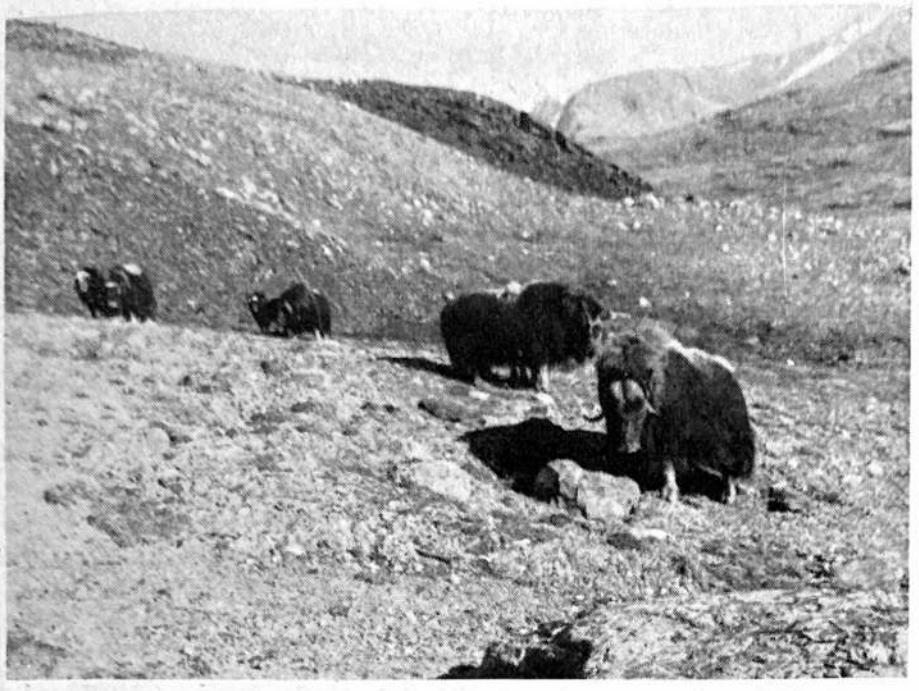
Wildlife is protected in east Greenland by the Danish authorities and the regulations regarding the musk ox vary from year to year according to current reports on the status of the animal. Last year the trappers were allowed to shoot six. Next year the number has been increased to ten, but on the condition that they are all males. The trapper depends very much on the meat for his own personal needs.

A Nasty Moment

The musk ox is generally speaking a docile ceature, and if treated with respect is quite harmless. They usually wander about in family groups, and it is the lone bull which can be a little aggressive if disturbed. On one occasion Arne and I were moving camp and we came across a small family of three standing on our path on the shores of a large lake. This appeared to us to offer an excellent chance to photograph the animals. We did not bother to remove our heavy packs so confident were we about the harmless nature of the animals. As usual, on our approach the bull took up his stance in front of the family and stood eying us quietly, rubbing his nose on a large nearby stone. We must, we thought, get one really good close-up. Arne stepped in front of me and was little more than eight or ten yards from the bull, with me just behind. I thought I detected an aggressive look in the bull's eye, and just as I held up my camera to get him in view there was a sudden skuffle. The bull snorted and charged. Arne turned quickly and stepped behind me.

If only I stayed composed for a fraction of a second I should have had a unique picture. I

Paul Carslake by one of the fox traps. This is n



A herd of musk ox near one of the camps.

did not. In turning I overbalanced and my pack shot over my head and became entangled in the camera and binocular straps, pinning me helplessly to the spot. Pots, pans and other bits and pieces loosely held on the pack clattered to the stones as they were scattered. There I was with my back to the bull completely helpless, unable to do more than stagger a few paces and at his mercy. All this took place in a split second. Meanwhile, the bull had advanced rapidly six paces only and was standing there just behind me staring incredulously. With difficulty, and help from Arne, I removed the pack and retreated. Everything was strewn in front of the bull's nose. He stood motionless, uninclined to move an inch. We walked slowly away, and when we were about a quarter of a mile from the family they turned tail, led by the bull, and fled along the shore of the lake and up the mountain, running very fast.

This incident certainly gave us a shake. We returned to collect our goods and chattels and moved on with a little more respect for the musk ox than we had before.

The Polarbjorn took five of us to Noa Dal on Ymers island as arranged and we spent a most delightful week here. Although the wonderful spell of fine weather continued the "nights" were cooler and the wind a little fresher. The terror of the mosquito had passed. We spent our time studying the birds and one day we climbed a 5,600ft. peak to obtain a magnificent panoramic view of the surrounding fjords and mountains. We camped at both ends of Noa Dal and were picked up in Franz Joseph fjord on the west side.

Salvage of the Jopeter

After visiting other trapper stations we sailed south to Mountnorris fjord. The Jopeter, a Norwegian ship caught in the ice last year with a lost propeller and given up as lost, had been found by one of the helicopters working in conjunction with a Danish geological party. It was apparently in fine shape, lying on the sand in Mountnorris fjord on the east side of Traill island. A sealer had been ordered from Norway to try and pull her off and we had been detailed to go and help if necessary. This cut the activities of the expedition by several days. When we arrived on the scene the Jopeter had been safely floated and a third ship was lying alongside taking off cargo. It was decided that our duty would be to guide the ships and force a passage through the ice.

The weather had broken and when the small convoy sailed it was snowing hard. Summer had slid quickly into autumn. Soon the long cold winter would once again envelop the country and seal it off with ice until the following June. Ice conditions were unexpectedly good, and after twenty-four hours our job was completed. We increased speed and soon left the other ships astern.

It had been a wonderful expedition and we are most indebted to the Danish and Norwegian authorities for giving us this opportunity to visit an area so infrequently visited by Englishmen. The expedition was supported by grants from the Royal Society, the Wildfowl Trust, the Gadow Fund, the Gilchrist Education Trust and Esso Petroleum Ltd. To these and to all the firms who so generously contributed stores we are most grateful.

not set properly, but it gives an idea of the principle.

Wildfowling Clubs

The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland: Hon. Secretary, Brig. G. D. Holmes, Burnham Thorpe, Nr. King's Lynn, Norfolk.

The annual general meeting, and the annual dinner, of the Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, will take place at Hoylake on the afternoon and the evening of March 16, 1957, under the arrangements of the Dee Wildfowlers' Club.

Applications for tickets to the dinner, and questions regarding accommodation, should be sent, by February 15, to Dr. Bradshaw, Redbanks, 70 Bank Road, W. Kirby, Cheshire.

* * *

An unusual event in the East Sussex G.C. and W.A.'s programme was an invitation to send representatives to a meeting of the Hastings Natural History Society on October 23 at the Hasting Library Lecture Room. This arose out of an original proposal of ours that the Society should co-operate with us on the organisation and presentation of a lecture by Dr. J. W. Harrison of Sevenoaks. The Society did not feel able to co-operate; indeed, felt that "the idea of our association was irreconcilable with their ideas of wild life preservation." Our committee felt that this must be due to a general misunderstanding of our aims and objects and accordingly suggested this meeting to which the Society agreed.

Our Association was represented by four committee members: S. A. Lambert, F. West, R. Obbard, and myself D. N. Bradshaw as hon. secretary. We found the atmosphere at the meeting to be cordial and friendly and we hope succeeded in dispelling a number of points about wildfowling over which some doubt had obviously been felt.

The chief of these was perhaps the fact that we are very much concerned about the preservation of wild life and the protection of rare birds. It was generally agreed that, in order to accomplish these aims, a gun is often the only means of controlling predatory birds, and one of our representatives made a point about the damage that results to the eggs of rare birds during the nesting season if the birds are continually put off their nests by over-eager bird-watchers.

A return visit by representatives of the Society was arranged for our members' meeting on November 1.

* * *

In response to a letter in *The Shooting Times* thirty persons, interested in the formation of a proposed Mersey Wildfowlers' Club, were present at a meeting held in Liverpool on October 17.

Lt.-Colonel G. J. Fink opened the meeting and introduced Mr. W. L. I. Brockbank, hon. treasurer of W.A.G.B.I., and Mr. J. B. Brough of the Dee Wildfowlers' Club, who had offered their valuable assistance and advice.

Mr. Brockbank having consented to take the chair, Lt.-Col. Fink pointed out to those present the relatively large area of the River Mersey "unorganised," from a wildfowler's point of view and the possibilities that might exist for an organised club.

Mr. Brockbank then told the meeting about the fullest possible co-operation from ornithologists and the R.S.P.C.A., in the area who recognised that a well-run club is the best means of safeguarding wild life. The wide range of activities, and the influence clubs can exert in promoting a better understanding between shooting men and all other parties interested in wild life, was stressed. The activities of the many flourishing clubs in the near vicinity of Merseyside were given as an example of how such clubs provide a form of insurance policy for landowners, and a trade union for shooting men.

The response emphasised the interest in the area, and it was decided to form a committee to enquire into the possibilities of shooting and wildfowling, in particular, in the River Mersey area. Officials were promptly appointed, a basic policy to follow agreed upon, and a H.Q. for further meetings established. The fullest possible support was pledged, and was immediately forthcoming, from the Dee, North Cheshire, and Southport Clubs, and with such support from so many organisations the future of the Club seems assured. Those interested in joining, should write to the hon. secretary, R. G. McBurnie, 33 Bonnington Avenue, Gt. Crosby, Liverpool 23.

GUN GOSSIP

by North Country

ANOTHER catalogue has come to hand at the date of writing—from as far afield as Italy. This is the production of the firm of Pietro Beretta, of Brescia. The agents are Messrs. Salter and Varge Ltd., of Empire House, St. Martins-Le-Grand, London, E.C.1. This catalogue is beautifully produced and superbly illustrated in the most lavish style and it is printed in both English and Italian. Like all good catalogues, too, it is a mine of interest for the sportsman and the shooting enthusiast.

Let me quote about the history of the firm: "More than two and a half centuries have passed since the day on which the name of Pietro Beretta 'manufacturer of arms' appeared for the first time in the annals of the Trompia Valley. In the Brescian and Italian history of the production of arms, the name Beretta stands for tradition and modernity. Just as two and a half centuries ago Pietro Baretta appeared as an innovation in the art of arms manufacture so even today this spirit of original creation distinguishes the firm of Baretta . . . The Fabbrica d'Armi 'Pietro Beretta' flourished during the glorious Republic of St. Mark, and throughout the vicissitudes—not always fortunate—of our history, was able to maintain its activity, based as it was upon mutual co-operation and highly skilled workmanship developed from generation to generation by men who had made an art of their work. Improvements in the manufacture of the arms have been unceasing: the highly developed machinery and the perfection reached by tools and equipment make it possible to offer at very reasonable prices arms which can be considered among the best on the international market."

Wide Range of Weapons

Illustrations follow of the art of engraving, of many departments of the factory, of a variety of manufacturing processes. Then the weapons themselves are shown beginning with standard double game guns, special pigeon guns, guns with beavertail forends for clay-pigeon shooting, over-and-under guns, single-barrel guns, hammer guns, many types of .22 rifles, etc. Automatic pistols take up several pages, which should make many a mouth water among pistol enthusiasts who are restricted by our Firearms Act. Next come light automatic carbines, submachine guns, etc., and some interesting pages of the history of the Trompia Valley, welfare amenities and so on—all fully illustrated. This is indeed a very fine and most comprehensive publication.

The Modern Catalogue

As I see a number of catalogues each year, I can say that modern issues seem to cover more ground than they did formerly. They are more informative and introduce many items of interest which, in the old days, would never have been included. It can fairly be said that the sportsman can learn from a *perusal* of these publications.

To shoot game with a gun of fine finish and quality does add to the pleasure of sport. This fact becomes all the more patent when it is found what skill and craftsmanship are put into the making of guns in many different parts of the world. I am very fond of shooting, but I feel sure I should not enjoy it to the full were it not for the well-made and finished guns which I employ. A gun may be just a tool for killing vermin and doing a job of necessary work. If that is the case, the cheapest, and plainest reliable weapon should be obtained. As long as the essential safety precautions are observed, nothing else then matters. But to me shooting means far more than this. There are my colleagues, the country over which I shoot, and above all my gun. So I like to do my best to keep my guns in the best possible condition.

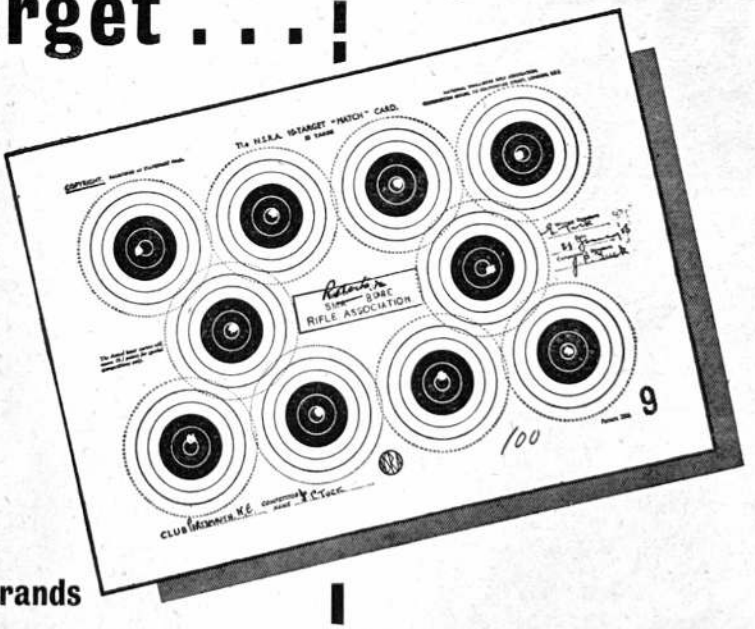
Full Chokes at a Covert Shoot

A reader asks me if it is all right to turn up at a covert shoot with a gun that is bored full choke in both barrels. Well, yes, of course it is, so far as your host is concerned. What boring you may have in your gun is entirely your own affair. In any case nobody need know your gun specifications—unless you shoot clumsily and smash your birds. Your host will soon know then! The point is—and it is a question which concerns very many of us—whether you can afford in the ordinary run of pheasant shooting, to use full chokes! Naturally you wish to shoot your best, especially at an event which has cost money and, moreover, is something of an occasion. To make effective use of a full choke at *normal* driven pheasants you need to be a good shot. Otherwise, you will smash some and miss others. The ordinary man at any ordinary pheasant shoot will be wise to have his right barrel improved cylinder and his left *slightly* choked. He will bag more birds in this way. Leave full chokes to the experts.

LET your *Shot* be well cast, and round without *Tails* hanging on, which in the Flight gathereth Wind, and by Consequence Flieth not so far. As to the size it must be according to the *Fowl*, or *Birds* you design to kill, but not too great, for then it Flies thin and scattering; nor yet too small, for then it is of small force; for the *Fowl* will Fly away with it, as having neither strength nor weight to enter far to their prejudice. (Richard Blome: "The Gentleman's Recreation.")

A different target . . .

but good sport nevertheless



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A LONG-TERM POLICY

by W. H. Fuller

SMALL-BORE riflemen of almost every standing are constantly being shown cards shot by other marksmen accompanied by comments such as—"I don't know what I did then . . ." or "Can you tell me why . . . ?"

Personally I do not think anyone can give the reason for a bit of bad shooting just by looking at one card. Far more evidence is required before any reasonable diagnosis can be made and even then the evidence should be distinctly recognisable. The analysis of group patterns includes the rejection of a number of effects which are not due either to the rifleman, the rifle or the ammunition.

It is very necessary to appreciate the fact that it is theoretically and practically impossible for every shot to hit the target in exactly the same place. It depends, of course, quite a lot by what any individual means by the same place. One marksman may accept the ten-ring as good enough whilst another would not be satisfied unless every bullet passed through the exact centre of the X-ring. It can be stated quite confidently that no bullet can be guaranteed to follow the flight-line of a previous one. Yet two bullets do make a hole so exact that it takes an expert scorer to decide if two bullets did actually pass that way. And it happens not only to the expert but also to the beginner. The expert has a better *chance* of doing so because normally he keeps his shots much closer together than the beginner, but any experienced stats officer will tell you that there are almost as many two-shots-through-one-hole in the C and D classes as there are in the A.

In the use of the word *chance* lies most of this side of the story. Each of the three main contributors to the firing of every shot, the marksman, the rifle and the ammunition has its own characteristics which will theoretically produce a recognisable pattern of shots on the target. For example, low grade ammunition will theoretically produce a vertical pattern because the main variable in low grade ammunition is differences in velocities which will cause bullets to strike higher or lower. In practice the rifle treats different velocities differently and an angled pattern or even a horizontal one may result. The other contributors, each having their own patterns will inevitably complicate the issues, sometimes adding their effects and sometimes cancelling out each other.

The patterns themselves depend mainly on *chance* effects coming into operation and there are laws about this kind of thing. The first is *certainty*. If a rifleman has a good rifle, sound ammunition, experience and the confidence of all three he will be able to state with *certainty* that his next shot will go into the ten-ring. Providing that all the bits and pieces act as they have done on all previous occasions then the shot will *certainly* go inside the limits of the statement, that is the ten-ring. The second law is *indeterminacy*. Although the rifleman will be able to state with *certainty* that his shot will go into the ten-ring he will not be able to *determine* where inside the ten-ring the bullet will go. It can fall *anywhere* within the ring. It may fall on the opposite side of the group or it may fall dead on top of the previous or a previous bullet. Where, is quite *indeterminable*. However, a third law saves the situation by stating that the bullet has a better chance, a greater *probability*, of hitting nearer the centre than elswhere. In some cases the well known law of inverse squares is applicable.

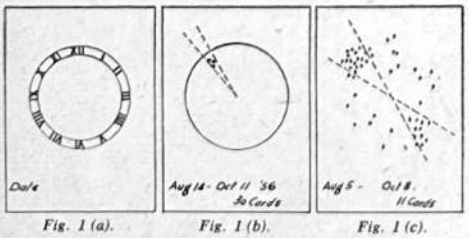

Fig. 1 (a). Fig. 1 (b). Fig. 1 (c).

Fig. 1 : (a) The suggested clock-face record card. (b) Record card of a marksman shooting to an average of 99.9. Clock figures omitted. (c) Record card of a beginner's first eleven cards.

These explanations apply to anything which can effect the flight of the bullet, bad ammunition, bad aiming, poor holding, a worn barrel, wind, light and all of the one hundred and one things which somehow contrive to keep the bullet out of the ten-ring. It is therefore obvious that although a contributor will not be responsible for two shots going through one hole except on very rare occasions, it is possible for two or more to combine and by more than mere chance, produce a doublet. What is important to remember about two shots through one hole is that it is not necessarily proof of good shooting or of a good barrel or of consistent ammunition. The two-shot hole may lay on the very opposite extremes of two characteristic patterns. And two entirely different causes may have put them there. At the same time it may be good shooting, but every long-range marksman will remember the eight "loverly" centres and the key-holed pair out in the cold of the nine-ring. I have heard it stated that this "always happens" but if the marksmen concerned will think about all the other 8x-98's they have shot they will agree that it is the peculiarity of the pattern which sticks in the memory.

Practical Recording

Patterns do not often show clearly defined characteristics mainly because an inadequate number of shots are fired at one target to make them obvious. This is particularly so in short range shooting where the bullet makes a hole which is large compared with the small differencies we are trying to find. Further, when ten-bull targets are used it may be difficult to picture all ten shots as if they were on one target. It is however very necessary to have a really complete picture, possibly of hundreds of shots, before sufficient evidence accumulates to make diagnosis possible.

The solution is a simple one and one which is often used in technical analysis. It is really only necessary to extract the deviations, in our case the shots which do not make the ten-ring or the X-ring according to our standard. The beginner can start to record all shots which do not make the nine-ring. The average club member need only extract those which do not make the ten-ring whilst the expert will only take out those which do not make the X-ring. In fact, for our particular purpose, we discard all the good shots and concentrate only on the bad ones for that is where the useful evidence of poor scores actually lies, whether it is due to ourselves or to our equipment.

The easiest way to keep such a record is on a piece of card which can be slipped into the breast pocket of the shooting jacket and taken out and used when the firer is actually on the firing point. If you want to be particular you can draw a clock face as I have done in Fig. 1a. If you are not so particular and you are one of the people who can read the time when there are no figures on the clock-face, and who cannot, then a small circle can be drawn ; in fact if you mark the top of the card so that you will know if it is upside down or not you need not draw on the card at all.

After you have shot your card examine it and mark on the record card the positions of those shots which have lost you points. It is not important that the exact position of the shot is recorded. All we want is the rough direction in which it went out. The extent of the departure is of no real importance either, for the same fault which puts the shot on the nine-ring, can within the limits of the fault's pattern, just as easily put it into either the eight-space or the nine-space.

The expert may find that he has only to mark his record once for every six, eight or ten cards. No matter; record it. The record is better than the memory. For there is every possibility that his next nine will be in the same direction as his last. And it is important when a man is shooting at that level to know where and why he loses the odd shot.

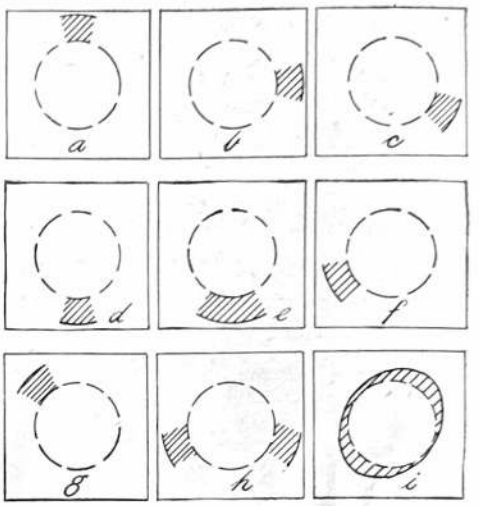

Fig. 2 : (a) Barrel leading up and then clearing itself for the majority of shots. (b) Pushing the fore-end over to centralise the original incorrect aim. (c) Trigger pulling. (d) Poor ammunition. (e) Reaching forward. Fore-hand stop too far forward. (f) Pushing the butt forward with the shoulder. Cant. (g) Unstable fore-hand hold. Butt slipping down shoulder. (h) Left elbow not properly underneath the rifle. (i) Bad sighting. Try a larger fore-sight. Pattern can set at almost any angle.

The beginner, in a comparatively short time, will have a nice complete, well-marked card which he will be able to show his club captain or coach, either of whom will now have a much better chance of suggesting where he may be going wrong.

I have marked up Fig. 1b to show the sort of record a 99.9 average man might expect to get after firing thirty cards. Fig. 1c I have drawn to show the kind of record actually obtained by a newcomer. As one might expect there are shots all over the place, but there is a concentration at 10 o'clock which points to trouble with the fore-hand, loose sling, wrong position for the fore-hand stop, wrong hand-hold. There is also a less marked concentration at 4 o'clock and this is possibly due to trigger pulling which could be expected from a beginner.

Should you be able to improve your shooting by using this method do not waste the effort. Date the record card and pin it up with your expert's diagnosis on the door of your gun locker. The next time you have a bad run take a quick glance at it and apply the treatment as before. The tendency to drop back into an old fault is particularly marked with small-bore shooters and more often than not one assumes quite incorrectly that the old fault has been overcome and that it must be something new which is causing the present trouble. To be able to refer quickly to records will amply repay you.

THE RIFLE CLUB TYRO

by Geoffrey Moore

TONY is my nephew, so I had made a real effort to persuade him to join the club. He had countered, at first, with a great many excuses. There were so many other calls on his time. He didn't know anything about small-bore shooting, and so forth. At last he had agreed to join, and I put his name up and he was accepted.

Then I had the bad luck to be away for the next six weeks. On my return, I enquired anxiously of him, whether he was enjoying the shooting.

"Don't go," he said briefly.

"What sort of score did you get, the first time?" I enquired cautiously.

Tony shook his head. "There wasn't a first time," he said.

I fetched two bottles of beer and glasses, and had levered off the tops of the bottles, before either of us spoke again.

"I went along," he began half apologetically, as though he feared that I might be feeling bad about it, which I was.

"Did the other new ones go too?" I asked, and Tony nooded. "They didn't seem to want us," he said. "They were busy with a match or something. We hung about for half-an-hour, and then the secretary came along.

"Was he helpful?"

"He asked us if we were enjoying ourselves, and then dashed off somewhere."

"But didn't you get any shooting?"

"Nobody asked us. So we came away."

Well, as a matter of fact, it is Tony's third year with us now, and I am glad to be able to record that he has just been promoted to our "C" Team. I believe that he is going to be a first-class shot one day. But he will never do a better job for us than he did the night he, and the other new members, walked out on us the way they did. We thoroughly deserved it.

I was just as much to blame as the rest of the Committee, I freely admit. And how I shook the others up over it all, at our next meeting.

We do not have room for many new members each year. I expect that most clubs are the same. Once the bug of small-bore shooting has bitten, it takes a long time, a failing eye and perhaps mounting blood pressure, before the average member will admit that he is getting too old. Still, even the best must go in time, and it is up to the remainder to see that there is just as good material coming on.

Thinking About It

On that night of the meeting, I soon had every member of the committee blushing a bit, and agreeing with me too. Putting out of our minds such pressing problems as the choice of the reserve for the next big "A" team match, and discussion on some new target, we really got down to thinking about the training of our tyros.

In the first place we were surprised to discover that there were no less than fifteen who had never even aspired to firing for the junior team. The secretary had to get out his list of members to remind us, as well as himself, who many of them were, for they very rarely came to the club. After a little honest heart-searching amongst ourselves, we had to admit that we could not really blame them.

We had the rifles for them, of course, but a tyro who was not a thruster, might find it hard to get included in a detail for the firing point. Even then he might be too ashamed to wait to see his card, covered with sixes and sevens and perhaps a miss or two.

There and then, we decided to reform all this.

Tyros were to be given two periods of two hours each every week, exclusively for themselves. I believe it was Johnny, in those days still our Captain, who made the capital suggestion that all members of the first three teams should be asked to accept a tyro under his wing for coaching and general guidance.

Ladder Competition

Someone then pointed out that, as competition is the essence of good shooting, the tyros must be given an incentive; and the best way would be to organise a ladder competition. To decide the initial order of names on the ladder they would, in the first place, be drawn from a hat. Thereafter they would fire each week by threes, shoulder to shoulder. Anyone could go up two places or drop one according to the results. Promotion to the junior team would involve removal from the ladder competition.

The scheme caught on well amongst the prospective coaches, though I admit that we had a little more trouble persuading the tyros themselves that we really meant to do something for them at last.

The ladder competition soon became such a popular feature that many senior members wanted one for themselves, too. Some had been a little frightened at first, that they might be asked to spend four hours a week coaching. In practice, once the ice was broken, one or two seniors keeping an eye on everything, were sufficient.

This tyro training is now all very much an accepted thing. What brought its beginnings to mind was the secretary's report that we now have a waiting list of thirty for membership.

That sort of situation tends to split a club in two. While some of us begin to feel that we should plan to enlarge the range, and enter more teams in the local league, there is the "Suez Group"—and doesn't every club have one—who wish to leave things just as they have always been. All the same it is a nice, healthy complaint to have to wrangle about.

☆ ☆

Do You Pay Rates?

by J. E. Beazley

THERE are, I gather, nearly 600 self-supporting, range-owning, small-bore rifle clubs in the country. All of them will by now have had to face up to the problem regarding revised rates.

General re-assessment of rateable values came into force on April 1, 1956, and by now, all range-owning clubs will either have accepted their new rateable values, or contested them.

Of those who have contested them, I am interested to learn that some have been successful in getting a reduction, but distressed to hear that some have completely failed to convince their local authorities that rifle shooting should be treated in the same way as other sports contested at the Olympic Games.

Claims submitted to Local Authorities are based on Section 8 of The Rating and Valuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1955 which provides "that for the first year of the new valuation list (and for subsequent years until contrary notice is given by The Rating Authorities) the rate liability for the following hereditaments is limited to the amount of rates charged for the last year of the operation of the old list.

"(a) any hereditament occupied for the purposes of an organisation (whether corporate or unincorporate) which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objects are charitable or are otherwise concerned with the advancement of religion, education or social welfare;

"(b) any hereditament held upon trust for use as an almshouse;

"(c) any hereditament consisting of a playing field (that is to say, and used mainly or exclusively for the purpose of open-air games, or of open-air athletic sports). Occupied for the purpose of a club, society or other organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and does not (except on special occasions) make any charge for the admission of spectators to the playing field."

Let us rule out (a) and (b). Rifle shooting cannot, by the widest stretch of imagination be classed as having much to do with the advancement of religion, and I would be diffident about trying to convince the Chairman of Local Education Committees that rifle shooting came under their jurisdiction. I think I would like to have a go on the "Social Welfare" count because that is such a nice, loose nomenclature that is interpreted in so many strange ways.

But why worry? Clause (c) is surely the basis for discussion. I am sure that the wise men who rather inadequately elaborated on the description or definition of "a playing field" would, if prompted, willingly have phrased the clause to include an open-air rifle range.

The fact remains, they did not, so now it is left to the discretion of the Local Councils and Valuation Officers to say whether an open-air rifle range is a playing field, within the meaning of the Act.

Bless the councils and committees who have been human enough to translate the Act as I am sure it was intended.

Curse those who have demanded their pound of flesh by insisting that a piece of land, with a small dressing hut and a W.D. Approved Butt is a hereditament on which they extract more rates.

Of course a club could appeal to a Court of Law against the decision, but rifle clubs cannot afford the time and expense to fight councils on such matters, and in any case they join to shoot. But surely there is little difference between a field used for running, jumping, football and cricket, and a field used for rifle shooting. The one makes tougher and fitter men perhaps, but the other makes marksmen. Both types were needed in the last two World Wars, and both contributed to the very existence and survival of these bodies who now seek to discourage the rifleman whose sport is already a most expensive one.

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Pigeon from a Platform

by James Fraser

An ideal covert in which to build a platform.

I WAS considerably surprised, during a visit to England last year, to find that my host was totally ignorant of platform shooting. Perhaps more so because we, up here in Scotland, treat it as a matter of form.

I was staying on a very small, though extremely promising estate on the Welsh Border. Pigeon seemed to be everywhere. They came darting out of trees, fluttered hastily away from farm stackyards, swooped up out of thickets and everyone remarked on the numbers. Rather impetuously, I asked: "Where are the nearest platforms?" for I felt certain that such erections should surely exist in such a place.

My query was met with honest blank surprise. Someone, quite frankly, thought I was referring to the railway system. I proceeded, very gently as I had the feeling someone must have been pulling my leg, to explain that platform shooting was the accepted thing at home. When I discovered that all ears were entirely attentive, I knew I was breaking new ground, as it were.

For once, somebody was listening to me. I gave them the whole story.

My host sent me a letter at Christmas: it was folded into a huge slab of ham which had once been a healthy pig at Shrewsbury Market. Three platforms had been built and had yielded no less than a hundred and thirty odd birds in four short afternoon shoots. Nothing like this had ever been experienced on the estate before.

If you should choose to build a series of platforms (or simply one, for even one is better than none at all), don't make the mistake of sacrificing its height.

First pin down the average flighting area. If you are fortunate enough to have a belt of young spruce or larch, then build your platform in the middle of it. Four long poles, a few boards, some strong wire and a makeshift ladder are all you need for the job.

Building the Platform

Choose one of your sturdier trees in the plantation and set up your poles, north, south, east and west of it, so that they are in a box formation round it and separated from each other by some six feet at the base and tapering slightly towards their tops until the six foot distance has been reduced to a four foot one. Firmly nail the boards between the poles, so that you make a sort of tall crate by bonding the four uprights together.

Two-thirds of the way up the poles, sling a wire from each one and peg the trailing end firmly to earth, tent-fashion. The remainder of the boards are nailed into a four foot square floor which is mounted atop the uprights, or, better, four feet down from their tips, so that you have four corner supports for the wire rails you now fix in order to prevent an excited shooter from falling out of the platform. This wire railing is then bedecked with freshly cut pine or larch branches and there you are. You have a tiny platform higher than the tree tops, camouflaged, and ready for occupation. If you wish to do the job really properly, build a timber ladder up to the perch, complete with handrail. (Our platforms are equipped with such luxuries at times, but I have often been obliged to shin up a length of heavy knotted rope—which is really much more exciting.)

Most Skilfull Sport

The reason for building your platform high is obvious. Surrounding trees are eternally growing, perhaps about nine inches to a foot each year—and time will render the platform useless. Therefore, you build another, higher than the first if you have not allowed enough height in the first instance.

As for the shooting, it is fast and furious I honestly believe that pigeon shooting from a fixed platform is the hardest and most skilful sport that there is anywhere in the world. At the risk of being deemed a romancer, I would say that this type of shooting makes driven grouse look tame and I have had many shots at both, I may add.

The birds come in from their feeding late in the afternoon. If they come with the wind, do not bother with them—they are far too fast for even the best of guns. Sometimes they will come in vast rafts, very high up. Disregard them for the time being, and only shoot when they have peeled off and are swerving about, looking for a roosting place. Sometimes they will come belting past at your own level, straight out of the blue, before you are fully aware that there is a bird anywhere near you. You follow up, press, miss—and curse: "I must be getting very old!"

Or you may be lucky, and get them coming thumping up against the wind, not too high up, not too far out: you wait until they are just beyond you, follow, press twice and see both birds crumple and go down with a thump deep in the trees below—and suddenly you lose that increasing age and become a jubilant schoolboy again.

On the not-so-good days, do not go to the bother of counting empties or you may suddenly decide that platform shooting is far too expensive for the returns and give it up altogether. This is disaster and must not be tolerated.

To take one bird in three is, on an average, deemed good shooting in Scotland if you are working from a platform. Yet— and I shall never forget it—I once witnessed a gun kill seventy-eight birds with a hundred cartridges. I was so enthralled at the natural ease and skill of this shooter, that I stopped shooting and simply stood and gaped at him through a pair of binoculars. I learned a lot that afternoon.

Hammering Home Gun Sense

Platform shooting is like the impartial camera. It shows up defects with startling clarity. It hammers gun sense into you. No skeet range can possibly compare with it, no matter what tricks the trapmen can devise.

If you have a boy who is eagerly fondling his first 12-bore (I find a 20-bore is actually better than a 12 for this game, because the small, light gun handles much easier when intense speed is called for, and, of course, it is every bit as effective as a magnum . . . provided it is pointed the right way!), put him up on a pigeon platform whenever you can. Let him find out the trials and tribulations of shooting for himself, once he has the primary drill and procedure instilled into him. You will find that he will graduate in an astonishingly short time.

My one great regret is that I was thirty before I mounted my first platform. Had I been thirteen, I might have been a reasonably good shot today.

The platform allows one to see practically every bird that passes across a belt of timber. Shooting from the ground is all very well, but one only sees perhaps one bird in twenty. The platform cuts one off from the rest of the world. Those below seldom witness your mistakes, and this saves the appalling stigma of self-consciousness and perhaps the indiscreet remark about "slow powder." The platform provides an alternative in the close season—when most other guns are peppering clay saucers conveniently sprung from a predetermined position.

The cost of erecting such a boon is negligible, yet—and I still cannot understand why—a number of very practical and exceptionally keen sportsmen down the south had never heard of one until last year.

If any equally unfortunate reader should be in the same position, and, should he read this and presently derive the same remarkable benefits as those enjoyed in Shropshire, I shall be delighted to receive another slab of ham . . . or even a few slices of choice home-cured bacon.

COUNTY RIFLE MEETINGS

County Rifle Association secretaries or captains wishing to have their Open or Confined Meetings reported in "The Shooting Times" are invited to write to the Editor at 29 Old Bond Street, London, W.1. Every effort will then be made to have a representative present.

Gundog News

Conducted by P. R. A. MOXON, Herne Common, Herne Bay, Kent

THE field trial season is at its height, and I apologise to readers whose interest does not lie in this direction for the amount of space allotted to reports of them in this week's issue. I would point out, in this respect, that trials do a great deal to further the interests of shooting dogs, and thus of shooting men, and that the trial season is, after all, very short. Even the ordinary gundog lover can learn a lot from trials, and there is always something of general interest arising from almost every stake. Whether or not the trial dog is the best dog for ordinary shoots is a question which has been discussed here many times, and I doubt if it will ever be satisfactorily answered.

You must be prepared for any eventuality at field trials if you are running a dog. A while ago, a friend of mine was doing well with his labrador in an open stake, but failed at the water test, his dog obviously suffering from lack of experience in this element. Any handler should make certain that a retriever will take to water willingly if it is to run at trials, for although by no means every stake includes a water test (more is the pity), especially in the eastern counties, such a test is always liable to be sprung upon one, and failure here can ruin the chances of an otherwise excellent dog.

It is just the same with regards to different types of game and different types of cover, also with drives and walking-up. Although few retriever trials really test the dogs in rough, thorny woodland cover these days, a competitor may be called upon to face a briar patch, and in any case a good retriever should work in cover. It is no good saying after the stake that your dog had never retrieved a hare or a snipe—it is up to you to give it experience on everything possible, and if you fail to do so you cannot blame anyone but yourself for a let down in a trial.

Again, some dogs will sit well enough at a drive, but prove unsteady when walking-up, and vice versa. Most retriever trials are all walking-up these days (once again, more is the pity), but the odd drive may be arranged, and if your dog lets you down you are to blame. Trials are too costly and difficult to attend to encourage one to lightly enter them unless the dog is really up to it.

Eye-Wiping and the K.C.

Some time ago the Field Trial Committee of the Kennel Club suggested that when judging at trials too much emphasis should not be placed upon eye-wiping, as it is called, and that a dog should not necessarily be excluded from the awards because it has been beaten on a bird if it had otherwise proved excellent. For all this, judges still seem lavishly to regard eye-wipes as the yardstick by which to measure gundog ability in the field. As I am, from time to time, both a judge and a competitor, I fully realise the difficulties of judging stakes in these days when dogs are so highly trained and, in general, pretty even in performance, and in common with my colleagues I have sometimes been desperate for something to happen to make my judging book look less like a tome of glowing testimonials to canine efficiency.

I have frequently noticed that though most handlers are all in favour of not regarding eye-wipes too seriously (if they happen to their own dog), they immediately cry out in indignation if a dog which has had its eye wiped is kept in the running on, say, the second day of an open stake, and if it should get into the awards there is a lot of head shaking and mutterings about luck and the strange ways of judges.

When I have been judging trials, and also when simply watching them from the line, I have usually come away from them knowing quite well which two or three dogs I should like to take home with me, and in many cases these have not been the winners. Many times the obviously best dog in the stake has been unlucky, or badly handled, or the handler misdirected by the judge (unintentionally, of course), and there have been occasions when a simply appalling dog has crept into first place by the back door, so to speak, on account of having had nothing brilliant to do but—at the same time—not having had a failure recorded against it.

Such a dog may be slow, lacking in drive or style, and incapable of being handled but—and this is what mattered—it kept its eyes clean and when the judges went through their book at the end of the day it was the only dog without a failure. Experienced judges would probably not place such a dog very high, lack of eye-wipes notwithstanding, but it takes courage to stand out against old practices even in judging, for fellow judges and spectators and handlers can be very critical—even unkind !

FIELD TRIALS

The Labrador Club of Scotland held trials at Glamis, Angus, on October 12 and 13. Judges, Messrs. Peter Fraser, Horace Taylor and D. I. Walker. There was a very good show of game, and the trials started with a water test, birds driven from roots over the guns standing by the river. All the dogs were tried and all went across for their birds very well. Dogs were then tested for steadiness on hares when stubbles were walked-up. Several dogs failed on runners, and some did not seem too good in heavy roots, a lot failing to mark properly.

Awards. Novice Stake : 1, Mr. D. McKenzie's Staxigoe Spirit ; 2, Mr. T. Ramsay's Wheatrig Quicksilver ; 3, Col. H. Kingsford-Lethbridge's Creedypark Solo. Reserve, Lt.-Col. F. M. Bucher's Mischevious Maid. One certificate awarded. All-Aged Stake : 1, Mrs. Harcourt Wood's Norham Blackie (G. Meldrum) ; 2, Mr. P. M. Weatherby's Stockcross Kingcup (J. Cranston) ; 3, Mr. J. A. Rank's Hanlye Bobby (A. K. Manners). Reserve, Mr. W. Meldrum's Thanet Belle. Three certificates awarded.

* * *

The North Western Counties Field Trial Association held retriever trials at Edenhall, Penrith, Cumberland, on October 12 and 13. Judges, Messrs. F. Bell, H. McGinn and F. Kilgour. The weather was ideal, and the kindest of hosts, a most efficient steward of the beat and more than sufficient game helped the excellent judges, and the shooting was of the best, as was the dog work throughout the meeting.

Awards. Open Stake : 1, Mr. F. K. Atkinson's labrador dog Avenham Dictator ; 2, Major H. Peacock's Greatford Soda (J. Chudley) ; 3, Mr. H. Jackson's Pat of Barnacre. Reserve, Mr. T. B. Laird's Criffel Judy. Five certificates were awarded. Non-Winners' Stake : 1, Mr. J. A. Rank's Scotney Ginger (D. Munro) ; 2, Mr. G. Holmes' Maveen of the Wraes ; 3, Mr. Hal Jackson's Pat of Barnacre. Four certificates were awarded.

* * *

The Scottish Gundog Association held retriever trials at Strathallan, Perthshire, on October 15 and 16. The novice stake was run on the first day in foggy weather, but with good scent. Plenty of game—partridges, pheasants and a few snipe. The Open stake was run on the second day under similar conditions, again plenty of game. Mostly in roots and rough grass.

Awards. Novice Stake : 1, Lady Auckland's labrador Wendy of Cromlix ; 2, Mr. D. McKenzie's labrador bitch ; 3, Mr. J. A. Rank's labrador Scotney Brush (A. K. Manners). Reserve, Mr. W. Meldrum's Thanet Belle. Four certificates awarded. Open Stake : 1, Lady Auckland's Tiny of Cromlix ; 2, Mr. P. Weatherby's Stockcross Kingcup (J. Cranston) ; 3, Mr. J. A. Rank's Hanlye Bobby (A. K. Manner). Reserve, Mrs. Harcourt Wood's labrador dog (W. Meldrum). Two certificates were awarded.

* * *

The Southern and Western Counties Field Trial Society held an open stake for retrievers at Middleton, Longparish, near Andover, on October 16 and 17, when the judging was in the hands of Major Hugh Peacock, Major D. Blackett, Messrs. R. N. Burton and R. E. Leach.

Awards : 1, Lady Hill-Wood's labrador bitch

At the Golden Retriever Club's field trials at Thetford, Norfolk (left to right) : Miss L. Ross, Mrs. J. Hendley, Mr. J. Cranston and Mrs. E. J. Limsden.

Hiwood Amber (Staindrop Murton Marksman — Hiwood Peggy); 2, Mr. T. Lonsdale's labrador Templegrafton Jason, handled by K. Chudley (F.T.C. Brackenbank Jasper—Sally of Roscrea); 3, Mr. W. Lawrence Taylor's Galleywood Shot, handler R. Male (Staindrop Murton Marksman — Hiwood Peggy); 4, Mr. D. Cock's Roffey Gamble (L. Woodward). Reserve, Mr. C. A. Vandervell's Strattonley Squire (R. Hill). Ten certificates of merit were awarded.

* * *

The United Gundog Breeders Association held their Retriever Open Stake Field Trial on October 11 at Stretton Hall, Stafford, by kind invitation of Major and Mrs. R. F. P. Monckton. The weather was ideal with lots of sunshine. Major Monckton had set out the beats and there was an ample supply of game. This was due to the excellent keepering of Mr. Tom Sutton who showed no concern at all at the end of the trial when 80 head of game, duck, pheasant, partridge and hare had been shot. It was a pleasure to see a keeper so sure he could put up the game for Major Monckton and his guns.

A start was made with a water test. Duck were shot over a large pool and there was sufficient to give the 12 entries a thorough test. All competitors, with the exception of one, were first-class retrievers from the pool, with the duck well out in the middle. Most of the work was done in walking-up roots, clover, and a few drives. This was of the best and a very enjoyable day it was for all.

The judges were Messrs. W. D. Edwards, R. Goode and C. Beeston and the awards were made as follows:

First, Eastwalton Blackberry, an excellent labrador owned and handled by Lt.-Col. E. H. M. Unwin; 2nd, Haulstone Yenson, golden retriever owned by Mrs. P. Eccles and handled by G. Orrit; 3rd, Whittlemoor Marcus owned and handled by Mr. E. A. Curtis. Reserve, Gorhambury Mingo owned by The Hon. John Grimston; handled by Mr. F. Cockayne. Certificates of merit: Chireham Swallow owned and handled by Mr. John Charles. Templegrafton Susan owned and handled by Major T. G. Moyle.

It was very encouraging to see such a splendid entry with 12 dogs and 7 Reserves in the Stake, the hon. secretary, Mr. F. Blakeley is to be congratulated on such an excellent card. W. D. Edwards.

* * *

The Flatcoated Retriever Society held its Open Stake on October 12 and is very grateful to Lt.-Col. Sir Thomas Cooke, J.P., for his generosity and the friendly welcome extended to us at the beautiful venue of Sennowe Park, Fakenham, Norfolk. His kindness will long be remembered by those who were privileged to enjoy an excellent day on this sporting estate. It was an added pleasure to see Lady Cooke taking such an active part in the day's activities, and the example set by our hosts seemed to inspire all concerned.

This was one of the outstanding occasions when everything fitted into place and nothing went wrong. The organisation was brilliant and was mainly due to the genius of Brigadier F. W. Clowes, who lives convenient to the area, and who had obviously called on his store of military training, although I must confess that the existence of a military manual on "the organisation of Field Trials," was a complete surprise to me.

The finest tribute to the excellence of the planning can best be described by the following story. One of the handlers approached me during the day and enquired if it was possible to give him some idea as to the nature and direction of the next drive. I merely consulted a brief which had been carefully prepared for me and a glance was sufficient to inform him of not only what was happening at the moment, but also exactly what would take place during the period before lunch. The handler concerned looked at me in what appeared to be reverence, thanked me, and departed with an enhanced opinion of the Society.

The weather, too, was perfect and to complete the perfect day we were blessed with an excellent team of judges in: Mrs. M. K. Wentworth-Smith, The Earl of Northesk, and Mr. F. W. Busuttil. It was a pleasure to see the patience and understanding displayed to all the handlers and the final placings appeared to please everybody.

The Society was particularly pleased to have two members of the Gamekeepers Club competing for the first time and one of them had travelled a long way. Their presence and that of Major Neve, gave us all a great deal of pleasure. The cause of the working flatcoat is very much in need of the support of every available enthusiast, and who knows to what heights we may rise by a really united effort. A promising feature of the card was the number of puppies competing and right well did they perform. We must always have young dogs coming along to replace the veterans.

Probably the greatest failing in the performance of the dogs was the general inability to get right out, and also a lack of real drive. This may have been due in part to a lack of experience in the young ones, which time will correct. This criticism could not be applied to all the runners as some of those on view could keep up with the best of any breed of retriever. The general lack of pace is not confined to flatcoats.

The judges at the Golden Retriever Club's trials at Thetford, Mr. D. Cock, Mrs. A. Heywood Lonsdale and Mr. Benson.

Never Far from the Top

Colin Wells is never far from the top and once again he had charge of the winner in Ch. Waterboy, with a puppy as reserve. He also collected the Special Prizes for best puppy, best handled by a gamekeeper and a Special for reserve. Colin is a loyal supporter of the breed and deserves to succeed. Second went to Wilson's Pewcroft Page. Third to Walter Allen's Shinner of Fredwell whom we were all glad to see competing. Certificates of Merit were awarded to Well's Claverdon Tawny Pippet, Tansey's Bob of Riverglade and Dr. Laughton's Claverdon Black Pepper, beautifully handled by Miss Gwen Knight whom we were all glad to welcome on her public debut as a handler and who incidentally has upset the annual automatic collection of The Lady's Cup by Dr. Nancy Laughton.

Everyone agreed that it was a memorable day and whilst the Society was very pleased to welcome our new friends we are not forgetting the old and their continued loyalty is much appreciated. Our thanks are due to outstanding team of guns and all who contributed to a most successful day. H. A. Wilson (hon. sec.).

The Competitive Training Class of the South Eastern Gundog Society to complete the season's training was held at Betchworth on October 21, with the club's trainers, Mr. G. A. Williams and Mr. H. L. Curtis judging, and with the chairman, Mr. W. E. Hickmott, as referee. Results: 1st, Mr. J. K. Childs' Labrador, Burghwood Flight; 2nd, Miss J. F. Chamberlain's Golden Barlay of Alternun; 3rd, Mrs. D. Childs' Labrador, Burghwood Black Onyx. Reserve, Mrs. F. Pavey's Golden, Linette of Barpoint.

Forthcoming Field Trials

SECRETARIES OF FIELD TRIAL SOCIETIES ARE INVITED TO SEND US REPORTS OF THEIR TRIALS FOR PUBLICATION IN "THE SHOOTING TIMES." REPORTS SHOULD BE SENT DIRECT TO THE KENNEL EDITOR, MR. P. R. A. MOXON, HERNE COMMON, HERNE BAY, KENT.

Nov. 9: Northern Golden Retriever Association (Puppy and Non-Winners Stake). Appleby Castle. Secretary: Mrs. M. M. Waters, Greenford House, Raughton Head, Dalston, Carlisle.

Nov. 9 & 10: Labrador Retriever Club (Open Stake). Secretary: C. Brown, 19 Dulverton Road, New Eltham, London, S.E.9.

Nov. 12: Cambridgeshire Field Trial Society (Spaniels). Open Stake. Gorhambury, St. Albans. Secretary: Mrs. M. J. Curtis, The Moors, Whittlesford, Cambs.

Nov. 13 & 14: Kennel Club Open Stake (Retrievers). Raynham, Fakenham, Norfolk. Judges: Mrs. A. Heywood Lonsdale, The Earl of Northesk, Mr. R. Leach and Mr. E. Dodd. Secretary: E. Holland Buckley, The Kennel Club, 84 Piccadilly, London, W.1.

Nov. 13 & 14: Scottish Field Trials Association (Spaniels). Secretary: Lt.-Col. L. M. Kerr, Tullich Lodge, Middlebie, by Lockerbie, Dumfries.

Nov. 15 & 16: Eastern Counties Spaniel Society. Woburn Abbey. Judges: General A. G. O'Carroll-Scott and Mr. J. W. Scott. Secretary: Miss D. Morland Hooper, 3 Eastfield Road, Royston, Herts.

Nov. 22: Herts., Beds., Bucks., Berks. and Hants. Retriever Society (All-Aged Stake). Chilton, Hungerford, Berks. Judges: Mrs. A. M. Radclyffe, Mr. W. Hickmott and Mr. David Cock. Secretary: Mrs. J. Saunders, Liddly, Ashmansworth, Newbury, Berks.

Fisherman's Diary

by Coridon

"DID I tell you that I have been working on a new scheme to protect our rivers against pollution? It is rather original and aims at enrolling 500,000 anglers on co-operative lines."

Thus the late John Eastwood wrote to a friend in 1946. The words are quoted in an article entitled "The Birth of the A.C.A.," written by Mrs. Dorothea Eastwood, widow of the founder of the association. It appears in the *A.C.A. Quarterly Review* published last month.

John Eastwood sacrificed a great deal, including his health, to make the A.C.A. a success, but although he saw it safely launched and some minor cases brought successfully through the Courts, major triumphs came after his death. I was about to write that some of the more spectacularly successful results were beyond his expectations, but that would not be true, for they merely proved a theory in which he firmly believed. What must lie beyond his expectations is the fact that these amazing results were achieved, not with a membership of 500,000 but with 5,000—or, to be exact, 5,425 to the end of July. That figure includes membership of all types—life, individual, junior, clubs, hotels, etc. In the case of the fight against pollution it cannot be denied that many thousands of anglers are sitting back and watching with satisfaction (or being perhaps too disinterested even to watch) the successes gained on their behalf by a handful of supporters, while they themselves contribute nothing.

It is interesting to see that 780 clubs are included in the membership figures. This is a gain, and club membership means that many participate in A.C.A. activities who are not individually represented in the statistics. The number of benefit matches organised by clubs for the A.C.A. is also a useful source of income, and one that increases steadily in popularity.

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £1 a year. So far England, Wales and Scotland have produced 2,775 of these. Did somebody mention three million anglers last week?

Slipper Limpets

Efforts to stop the spread of American slipper limpets do not seem to meet with much success, and their accidental importation into this country is another example — though a little-known-one—of the damage that can be caused by the introduction, either accidentally or intentionally, of a new species.

The slipper limpet is more closely allied to winkles than to common limpets, and it is a deadly enemy to oysters, not because it preys on them directly, as do some creatures, but because masses of them simply smother the oysters or, when insufficient in numbers to do this, still commit a lesser crime by devouring the organic matter on which oysters would otherwise fatten.

They have a peculiar habit of bunching, not as do mussels, in large but loose festoons, but one on top of the other to the extent of nine or ten individuals. A few specimens were reported here as early as 1885, but the main body arrived some 50 years ago in the Southampton Water area in gravel ballast from America. They spread or were introduced by some other means to the Thames estuary and the East Anglian coast, and thence crossed the North Sea to affect the shores of Holland, Germany and Denmark.

In England the slipper limpet has spread northwards to Spurn Head and westwards to the eastern shores of south Devon. In early days it established itself slowly, but as its numbers increased its rate of spread increased disproportionately, and it is now a menace which the M.A.F. seeks to suppress.

Good Bait

The only people who are happy about slipper limpets are sea anglers. The creatures do no harm to fish and make a very excellent bait. When one reads, as one frequently does in these days, that a specimen fish was caught on limpet bait, it is the slipper and not our familiar common limpet that is meant.

There can be but few of us who did not learn from the common limpet something of the laws of suction and vacuum long before we could read two-syllabled words or worry about the laws of physics. Unfortunately the so really common and easily collected common limpet does not appeal to fish or refined tastes. It is good for cod, but a cod will eat anything.

A Literary Puzzle

There is nothing much of the out-of-doors about this paragraph, but November can be a nasty month, and an armchair and books are a solace when dark evenings and a close season may be combated comfortably by words.

I was in this situation and this mood a few nights ago when I idly picked from my shelves John Buchan's "Mr. Standfast," and dipped here and there into that familiar story. There is much in it of "Pilgrim's Progress," for that book was used as a code; but it also runs through Buchan's story like a reflected allegory, and the very title devolves from the Mr. Standfast of the "Progress."

Buchan led me to Bunyan, and as I opened "Pilgrim's Progress" I read the apology, which I cannot consciously recall having read before. I found these lines:

Yet fish there be that neither hook nor line,
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine;
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catch'd, whate'er they do.

What fish did he mean? Tickling implies trout, but trout can and could be caught easily enough on hooks and in nets. Bunyan was a man of Bedford, Kipling's "tinker oft in quod," and the Ouse, his native river, was hardly suited to trout tickling, but he had wider experience. The biography in my edition says that he "belonged to a caste of itinerant tinkers and gipsies," and his youth (in his own words) was "notoriously ungodly." Poaching and trout-tickling were probably parts of his stock-in-trade — but did he mean trout when, years later, he wrote his apology?

Clay Pigeon Shooting Fixtures

Nov. 17: Bowland & District G.C., Sawley, Clitheroe, Lancs. Open shoot.
Nov. 25: Beverley & District G.C. 1.30 p.m. Members shoot.
Nov. 28: Annual General Meeting of the Welsh C.P.S.A.

Small-bore riflemen who took part in the final Olympic Games trial. Members of the Shooting Team leaving for Melbourne next Monday are (standing, left to right) 1, F. Cooper; 3, F. W. Hopkinson; (sitting, left to right) 3, Fl./Lt. H. A. Steel; 4, G. W. Caffarata (team manager and captain); 5, S. B. Cranmer.

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CLAY TARGETS, £5/5/0 per cylinder of 770 ex works, plus cylinder deposit of £2.—The Gun Club, Limited, Gun Club Works, Crayford, Kent.

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SPECIAL SALE by Auction of Sporting Guns, Rifles, Fishing Tackle, Rods and Golf Clubs will be held early December. Entries or details must reach us no later than November 19th. For further details write or call: Messrs. W. & F. C. Bonham & Sons, Estd. 1793, Montpelier Galleries, Montpelier Street, Brompton Road, S.W.7. Telephone KEN 4887/8. Catalogues 3d. each.

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ANCIENT & MODERN D.B. RIFLES wanted, also all types antique firearms; cash, or will trade against our stocks, which include Hardy fishing tackle.—W. Richards Ltd., Gunmakers since 1780, Liverpool.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PROTECTION OF BIRDS ACT, 1954

The Secretary of State, having consulted the Advisory Committee on the Protection of Birds for England and Wales proposes to make an order under section 3(1) of the above Act in respect of Havergate Island and an area at Orfordness. A map of the areas may be inspected at the District Council offices, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Under an existing order all birds in the area at Orfordness are already protected. The proposed order would make both areas a sanctuary in which all wild birds and their eggs would be protected throughout the year (except that the rights of owners and occupiers of the land would be unaffected and certain other "authorised persons" would be allowed to kill or take the eggs of the harmful birds in the Second Schedule to the Act), would prohibit entry to the areas except by authorised persons or by permit and would apply the special penalty (maximum £25 and/or imprisonment) to an offence in the areas.

Any objections by owners or occupiers of land in the areas or by other persons affected should be sent by January 31st, 1957, to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

PHEASANTS AND WILD DUCK

COCK PHEASANT POULTS and Adult Wild Duck. Also young white Call Duck. Booking orders for Pheasant and Wild Duck Eggs for 1957. — M. Dwight, The Pheasantries, Berkhamsted, Herts. Telephone Berkhamsted 312.

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ROUGH SHOOT WANTED 40-60 miles from London.—Morley, 127 Kings Road, London, S.W.3.

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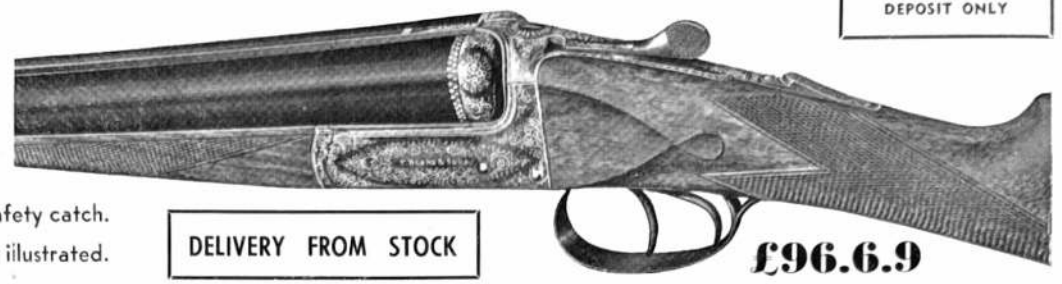

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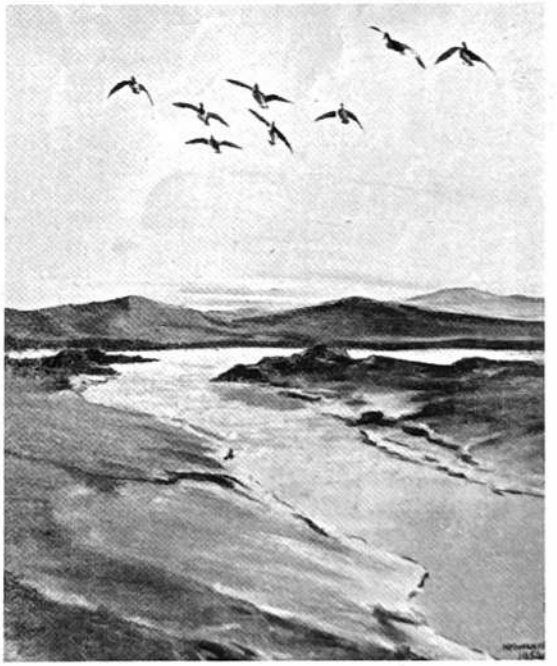

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